

What a year this has been!

Our look back at 2003 begins today
with an overview of national stories.
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Changes at historical society

Longtime director Susan Stryker
resigns; search on for replacement.
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Getting Hedwig

John Cameron Mitchell
returns to the Castro.
see Arts section



BAY AREA REPORTER

Vol. 33 • No. 51 • 18 December 2003

Serving the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities since 1971

B.A.R. PUBLISHER BOB ROSS DIES



by Cynthia Laird

Bob Ross, who rose from working as a chef to publisher of the *Bay Area Reporter*, one of the country's oldest and largest gay newspapers, died Wednesday night, December 10 at the Davies campus of California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco. He was 69.

The cause of death was complications from diabetes, said Tom Horn, the newspaper's legal counsel and trustee of Mr. Ross's estate.

Mr. Ross had been ill for several months and was surrounded by friends at the time of his death.

Horn emphasized that the weekly newspaper will continue publishing.

"We will continue to put out a quality product. There will be no immediate changes," Horn said Thursday, December 11.

Many in the community reacted with sadness at the news last week. Assemblyman Mark Leno (D-San Francisco) adjourned Thursday's Assembly session in Mr. Ross's memory; the Merchants of Upper Market and Castro Street lowered the rainbow flag at Harvey Milk Plaza to half-staff last Friday.

Supervisor Bevan Dufty, who adjourned Tuesday's board meeting in Mr. Ross's memory, called Mr. Ross's death a "huge loss" for the community.

Said Carole Migden, chairwoman of the state Board of Equalization, "Bob Ross was a pioneer who early on crafted a personal and business success and helped launch the political influence of the LGBT community by founding the *B.A.R.* His contributions to innumerable charities, his potent leadership, and sharp advocacy ought to be remembered."

A resident of San Francisco since 1956, Mr. Ross founded the *B.A.R.* in April 1971 after he took a disliking to the independent bar rags that were being published in the early 1970s, for he saw them as containing nothing more than "vicious gossip," and very little useful information for the community. So, as Mr. Ross recalled in a 2001 interview on the occasion of the paper's 30th anniversary, he and his friend, Paul Bentley, decided that they would produce their own bar publication. Bentley left the venture within a few years and Mr. Ross continued on as publish-

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New video addresses Latina/o community and HIV needs

by Zak Szymanski

The sun through the windows made viewing difficult, and the video was a rough cut of a work in progress, but the December 16 sneak preview of *Nuestras Historias - Nuestras Voces de liderazgo en el VIH* was impressive nonetheless.

The documentary was made possible by LLEGO, the national Latina/o lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender organization and community partners including the local groups AGUILAS; AIDS Community Research Consortium; Center for AIDS Prevention Studies at UCSF; Hermanos de Luna y Sol; Instituto Familiar de la Raza; San Francisco AIDS Foundation; Proyecto Contra SIDA Por Vida; and the San Francisco LGBT Community Center's Latino/a steering committee. *Nuestras Historias* is a film by Jose Partida and is produced by the company Grupo Vida.

The video's purpose is to present a different way of looking at HIV/AIDS to the Latina/o communities, and to inspire a new generation of community leaders. Tuesday's sneak preview took

place at the LGBT Community Center before a packed house in the Ceremonial Room, and was attended by many local and national advocates from the field of Latina/o HIV/AIDS work.

About an hour in length, the video captures a variety of Latino/a individuals from different generations who all work or volunteer for HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, advocacy, and support. The featured subjects discuss the history of the AIDS epidemic, their own inspirations for getting involved, the multifaceted issues of being Latino/a and HIV-positive, and their perspective on what it takes to create an impact on one's community.

One young man grew up with an HIV-positive father who was an intravenous drug user, and began making presentations to schools at the age of 14.

Martin Ornelas-Quintero, the executive director of LLEGO, said his own inspiration includes coming of age in a generation "that experienced its sexual awakening in the early years of AIDS," and that he views his role as one of providing "decisiveness, empathy, and fortitude."

Activist Gloria Nieto, the first Latina lesbian to ever address the Democratic National Convention, sees her own policy and advocacy work as a tribute to her fallen brothers.

"It's a belief in what one is called to do," said Nieto of the qualities of a leader.

Other activists interviewed noted the importance of being willing to call peers on their behavior, to address addictions as part of disease transmission, and to take time off from the work in order to nurture the self.

Tuesday's preview allowed audience comments and feedback, much of which will be factored into the final product, according to LLEGO board member and development director Reymundo Anthony.

"We're serious about incorporating community comments, so we plan to shoot a few more vignettes to include more transgressors and more women," said Anthony.

The final work will be subtitled in English and Spanish, and, once released, will be made available to community groups free of charge. Organizers are looking at a final release date of spring, 2004. ▼

Oakland OKs gender identity ordinance

by Cynthia Laird

The Oakland City Council voted unanimously to expand its nondiscrimination ordinance to include gender identity at its meeting Tuesday, December 16. The measure was sponsored by openly gay Council member Danny Wan, and his colleagues Council members Nancy Nadel and Jean Quan.

The ordinance will not only provide protection for those who

self-identify as transgender, but will also protect those individuals who are perceived to be gender variant from discrimination.

The ordinance had the support of the Oakland Police Department, with Officer Rebecca Campbell, who serves as a liaison to the LGBT community, speaking in favor of the expanded protections. The liaison position was created in the department following an attack against a transgender woman outside the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Cre-

ating Change conference in downtown Oakland in 1999. Witnesses reported that police treated the woman "like a criminal" and gay rights advocates lobbied Police Chief Richard Word and Mayor Jerry Brown for the liaison position in an effort to improve relations with the LGBT community.

"This frankly, is in large part an educational process," Wan told the council, adding that a year ago "a lot of this was new to me."

And like most discussions sur-

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Gay advertising has a banner year

by Matthew S. Bajko

It wasn't just a great year for gay television programs, 2003 was also a banner year for gay advertising. And one cable station in particular helped to further erode the "commercial closet."

Thanks to Bravo's successful block of queer programming, with its shows *Boy Meets Boy* and *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy* running back to back on Tuesday nights this summer, the first block of commercials specifically aimed at queer consumers aired.

"It is probably a first," said Michael Wilke, the founder of the Commercial Closet, a Web site that tracks LGBT images in advertising. While gay publications have been used for decades to reach a national audience, "the gay media is very limited in their reach."

Wilke spoke to members of Out and Equal Workplace Advocates at a holiday party held December 11 at the LGBT Community Center. During his talk last week, Wilke said the benefit of cable for companies who want to advertise to the LGBT market is undeniable.

Marketing on the regular broadcast stations is prohibitively expensive, and network executives may still shy away from gay marketing campaigns.

"Most gay businesses aren't very large and can't afford ads on television," he said. "What part of the au-

dience is gay? Nielsen doesn't track this. There is no good research on what favorite programs the gay community has," said Wilke. "In this case, one person decided by gut instinct this is the place to be."

He noted that the ads running on Bravo marked the first time that advertisers took an opportunity on television to reach a gay audience. The ads were remarkable in another way: they represented the first time that gay companies used television to market their products. Interactive Male, a gay phone chat line, and Mygaydar.com, an Internet site for gay men, both sought to advertise during the Tuesday nights.

"Bravo isn't expensive so these companies can afford to buy cable, especially because of the buzz these shows had been getting," said Wilke.

The ads didn't come without some controversy. Bravo pulled the chat line ad after it aired, citing the production values of the spot as substandard. It also rejected Mygaydar's ad due to the sexual content on the site. Time Warner did air the ad on its cable system during late night reruns of *Oprah*.

Wilke said he believes Bravo "got cold feet from taking money from these ads. They are playing them again, but later at night."

This year also marked the premiere of an ad which had two endings, one for heterosexuals and one for homosexuals. Online trav-

el discounter Orbitz created the spot, called "Hotel Matrix."

The spot, which uses Mari-onettes and is a throwback to the 1960s children's show *Thunderbirds*, begins when an Orbitz manager informs his employee, "A group of guys need a hotel in Miami for a party weekend, and money's tight."

The next scene is of an Asian woman and a blonde man standing on a balcony of their hotel. The woman comments how close they are to the beach and that the view is magnificent, and the man agrees, saying, "It certainly is..."

Looking through binoculars, he is actually looking at another man lounging by the pool. Watching this, the Orbitz manager says, "Eye candy! The party boys will be pleased! Another mission accomplished."

The second version of the ad drops the lingering stare at the poolside man and doesn't include the reference to circuit parties.

Orbitz — a joint effort by American, Continental, Delta, Northwest, and United airlines — created a dedicated gay travelers section a year ago that is now big business. When Wilke asked Jeff Marsh, the Chicago-based travel company's openly gay director of marketing strategy and promotions, about the ads, he said, "I'm trying to show Orbitz is a gay-friendly company, not just bring traffic to our site."

The ad ran not only on Bravo, but on BBC America during the

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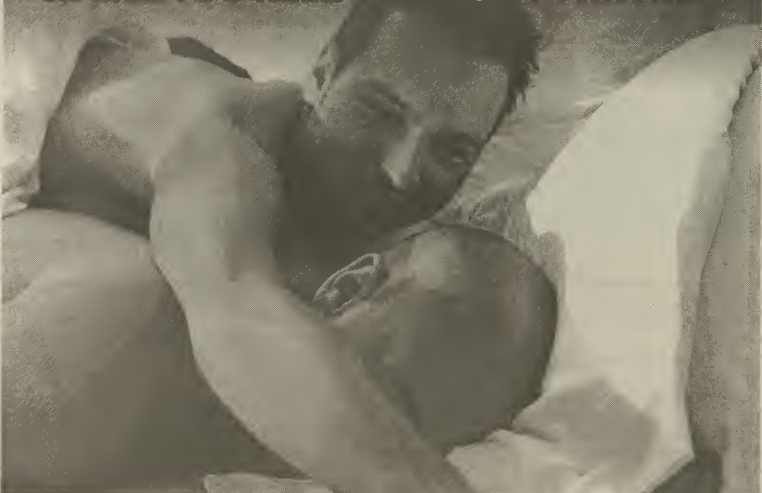


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San Francisco rolls out rapid HIV testing

by Matthew S. Bajko

After a successful four-month trial at Glide Health Services, the San Francisco Department of Public Health is expanding rapid HIV testing to 15 locations throughout the city over the next 12 months.

Health officials stress that the rapid tests are not supplanting more traditional tests, such as blood draws or oral tests, which can take one to two weeks before results are known. Rapid testing is being offered as another option for people who want to know their HIV status.

"Certain people may be more comfortable with rapid testing and some may want to stay with standard tests," said Teri Dowling, coordinator of the health department's HIV counseling and testing. "Rapid testing doesn't eliminate other tests being available."

The test, made by OraSure Technologies and approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration on November 7, 2002, is a simple finger prick, similar to a blood sugar test. Within an hour



Faith Gaither-Davis, left, HIV services manager for Glide Health Services, and Peter Morris, who manages the rapid HIV test pilot project for Glide, demonstrate the test.

of being pricked, a person can know their HIV status with 99 percent accuracy.

For those who test positive, a second blood test is administered and a follow-up visit is scheduled for a week later. Despite the need for a second test, Glide health officials said they have found the test to be extremely accurate in detect-

ing HIV. During FDA clinical trials, only one false-positive was found among 3,000 tests.

"Clients accept this result as an HIV-positive result. They start incorporating that into their life immediately," said Peter Morris, a social worker who oversaw Glide's pilot test program. "If people

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Adoption.com sued for antigay discrimination

by Zak Szymanski

Who knew that shopping for a family could be so easy? A few clicks around Adoption.com, the nation's largest Internet business of its kind, and customers can view the pictures and profiles of hundreds of prospective parents and children in need of a home.

But for all its consumer-friendly features, the site has one major obstacle for thousands of qualified people looking to adopt: it does not accept profiles from same-sex couples.

On Tuesday, December 16, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, in conjunction with the law firm Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP, filed a complaint in San Francisco Superior Court against Adoption.com for its refusal to accept the profiles of same-sex couples who qualify as worthy and deserving potential parents. The lawsuit alleges that Adoption.com, by excluding all

same-sex couples from using its services, violates California law that prohibits businesses from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation.

Offensive as the site may be by presenting people as commodities, the real issue, said NCLR Executive Director Kate Kendell, is that Adoption.com is "a huge site, with numerous portals that provide comprehensive information and resources to couples who are seeking adoption."

The lawsuit was filed on behalf of Michael and Richard Butler, a gay couple from San Jose who are registered domestic partners in California and have been together for eight years. They are licensed and approved as potential adoptive parents by the state of California, but upon submitting their information to Adoption.com, were turned down because of their sexual orientation.

Kendell said that originally, there was no language on the site prohibiting same-sex couples from using the service. Once the

legal issues were brought to Adoption.com's attention with regard to the Butlers, the site's eligibility requirements were carefully constructed to welcome "traditional" families, and only those who are "legally married" in a union recognized by all 50 states.

"Using marital status as an exclusion is a red herring, a stand-in for hostility toward lesbian and gay couples," said Kendell. "It is not a permitted basis for exclusion since there is no way for lesbian and gay couples to meet that requirement."

Adoption.com is based out of Tempe, Arizona, but its services reach potential parents across the country. Applying cyberspace to real space is a "somewhat untested area of the law," according to Kendell, but Adoption.com "specifically targets California and intentionally induces prospective adoptive parents from California to use their services."

"Simply because it is not bricks and mortar does not give them a

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New Year's parties ring in funds for nonprofits

by Matthew S. Bajko

Two New Year's Eve parties, one for lesbians and one for leathermen and bears, will not only celebrate 2004 in style but raise needed funds for worthy community causes.

After the runaway success of last year's inaugural party, Friction NYE is back for a second night of dancing to the sounds of DJ Matt Consola. The invitation-only party is a fundraiser for the AIDS Emergency Fund and the Positive Resource Center. Only 300 people will be allowed in through the doors.

Hosted by the producers of the monthly T-dance party Fusion, which is aimed at the leather and bear crowds, Friction NYE costs \$30 in advance. Tickets will not be available at the door.

This year's event will take place at a new club space called Terra at 511 Harrison Street, formerly Spectrum Gallery. The New Year's

Eve event will be the club's debut.

As the case with last year's party, 100 percent of the ticket price will benefit the two charities. Last year's event sold out in one week and raised more than \$3,000 for AEF and PRC. Tickets are available exclusively at The Barking Frog at 2215 Market Street. For more information see www.frictionevents.com.

Across town at the Carnelian Room, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and Bay Area Community of Women are hosting their own lesbian New Year's Eve party to ring in 2004. Dubbed "Dancin' On Top of The World" the party will take place in the elegant ballroom and bar atop the Bank of America Building.

More than 780 feet up in the air on the 52nd floor, the ballroom overlooks Coit Tower, the Transamerica Pyramid, the Bay Bridge, and San Francisco Bay. Perched over the waterfront, the locale offers dramatic views of the

city's annual fireworks display at midnight.

The party will take place from 8:30 p.m. to 1:30 a.m. and tickets cost \$95 per person. The evening will include dancing, gourmet hors d'oeuvres, and a champagne toast.

The two organizations have also brokered a deal with the nearby Omni Hotel. A double-occupancy room which normally runs \$329 will be offered for \$165 to those attending the party and includes valet overnight parking. To make a reservation, call (415) 677-9494, ask for in-house reservations, and mention the NCLR and BACW New Year's Eve room block.

The proceeds for the event will benefit the two group's A Fund of Our Own. To purchase tickets, go to www.ticketweb.com and enter the keyword "nclr." Tickets can also be bought by calling 1-866-468-3399. ▼

Gay Asian chorus presents holiday concert

by Matthew S. Bajko

The Gay Asian Pacific Alliance's Men's Chorus will bring an international flare to the annual holiday concert season when it takes to the stage this weekend.

The concert, "A Night Divine," will take place tomorrow night (Friday, December 19) and feature traditional holiday songs from around the world. The hourlong performance will include classical pieces as well as pop standards, folk tunes, and gospel-inspired songs.

Members of the choral group have a multilingual repertoire, which includes songs in Mandarin, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Korean, Japanese, Hawaiian, English, Latin, French, and Italian. A hallmark of the holiday concert is the sing-a-long, where the audience can join in as the chorus sings Christmas carols sung in Asian languages.

Entering its 15th anniversary year, the GAPA Men's Chorus was begun in 1989 to provide a showcase for the vocal musical talents of gay Asian Pacific men. The chorus is one of the first ethnically-based gay choral groups.

Through this cultural pro-



GAPA members host their holiday concert Friday.

gram, GAPA has worked to encourage artistic expression within the gay Asian Pacific community. Since it was formed, the choral group has promoted gay Asian Pacific achievement in the arts within both the broader gay community and the general Asian Pacific population.

Tickets for the show are \$5 and include admission to a post-show reception. The performance begins at 8 p.m. at Bethany United Methodist Church, 1268 Clipper Street at Sanchez in Noe Valley.

To make reservations, e-mail gapachorus@aol.com. ▼



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BAY AREA REPORTER

Volume 33, Number 51
18 December 2003

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Bob Ross (1971 - 2003)

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OPEN FORUM

The end of an era

There is great sadness here at the Bay Area Reporter. We have lost our founder, and the greater gay community lost a leader, when publisher Bob Ross died December 10 after battling diabetes. He was 69.

At our annual holiday party Tuesday night, the drinks were flowing as were the tears — many of us had stories to share about Bob, who started the newspaper in 1971 and built it into a powerhouse within the gay community.

Bob was a leader in the truest sense of the word. He gave many of us the opportunity to use our talents to keep the LGBT community informed through the paper, and he supported many gay and AIDS charities, as well as other cultural institutions in the city, with generous financial donations. The B.A.R. arguably paved the way for numerous other gay newspapers across the country, as the success of the paper proved that there was a readership eager for news and advertisers willing to support it.

Not everyone, of course, agreed with Bob. In recent years, the newspaper's endorsements for local political offices and propositions would often bring a firestorm of criticism and many letters to the editor. The more progressive members of the community in particular were often at odds with Bob.

At times we were too. Bob was of an earlier generation, and sometimes that came through loud and clear. He especially detested the use of the word "queer." Having the word appear in headlines was one of the cardinal gaffes. "I'm not queer, and when I am queer, I'll let you know, dammit," was an outburst we heard from him many times. Lately, some in the community have been identifying as queer, in part to take back the word that had been used as an insult. Over time, he seemed less angry if we referred to "queer youth," and that would be okay; he understood that young people were identifying themselves that way. But adults his age weren't queer, no siree. Never mind that several of his peers used the word to describe themselves when talking with us or writing letters. And we'd include that word in the

stories, somehow hoping that Bob would see the comments and realize that other people his age did use the q-word.

And the stories about Bob's legendary temper are true as well. Staffers still remember the infamous "potato throw" at the holiday party several years ago when Bob was served a baked potato still in the foil and promptly hurled it across the room.

But for all of that, there are many fond memories and many stories of Bob's involvement with local LGBT organizations. He loved the community here, and was angered by the religious right's constant efforts to discriminate against us and spew hateful rhetoric. He didn't back down when local politicians made their mistakes and put the community in the crosshairs.

A former Navy man, he wanted gays to serve openly in the military and knew they

had served in the armed forces for years — as he had himself.

Most of all, however, the founding of the newspaper gave gays a voice and a sense of community, and helped keep people informed in an era of police raids, violent gay bashings, and rampant discrimination.

Gay men often said, "Grab a girl" when the police were on their way, general manager Mike Yamashita recounted during an emotional speech to the staff Tuesday. When the paper started, gays couldn't hold hands while walking down the street in San Francisco, he tearfully added.

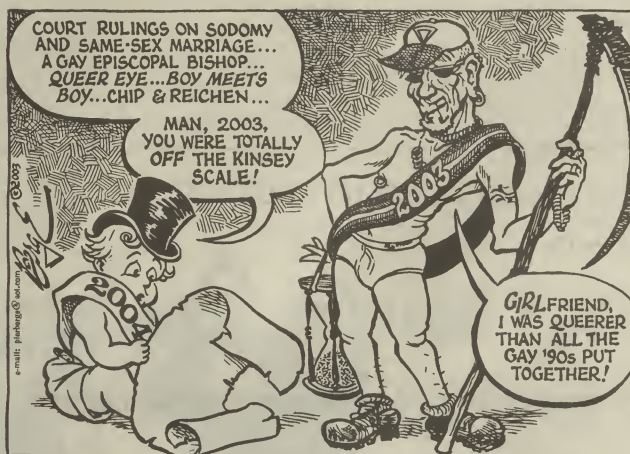
Yes, Bob had a vision, and he allowed the paper to grow into the respected publication that it is today.

We will continue putting out the paper every week, and aim higher as the community moves forward without one of its most influential leaders.

We miss you, Bob. ▼



Editorial



The final battle is here

by Molly McKay & Davina Kotulski

As two of many activists who have been fighting for years to secure civil marriage rights for same sex couples, we can hardly believe the visibility this issue is finally getting within the non-gay community. Forget football, America's new favorite pastime is voting in online Internet polls about whether gay people should be permitted entry into the institution of marriage.

The number of "gay" weddings one has attended is now a sign of social status discussed at non-gay cocktail parties. Your non-gay friends and families are bombarding your e-mail account with supportive articles they have forwarded to you. The informal gay-straight alliance movement is in full swing and we see the weight of public opinion finally tilting our way.

A large number of non-gay Americans have enthusiastically swept gay people off their feet and stand positioned to carry us across the threshold into our dream home of full citizenship. But, are the majority of voters truly ready to fulfill their promise, or will they get cold feet, step backwards, claim not to be ready, and ask if we wouldn't rather just continue to live together a bit longer to be sure we are all ready for this new commitment to one another?

There are also still some in the gay community dragging their feet on the marriage issue. Some equate the "gay lifestyle" with freedom from traditional institutions like the military and marriage; some are still not comfortable with the implications of community property and divorce court despite 10 years of living together. We have heard comments that this is just the "good gays" wanting the white picket fences and happily evers that "real queers" should sneer at. We've had friends complain that their mothers have

caught wind of the reality that being gay no longer forecloses grandchildren and are now publicly campaigning for their partners to consider adopting children. The non-gay community isn't the only community undergoing a cultural war on same-sex marriage.

The Lawrence decision was a litmus test indicating the community's coming of age. The holding of Lawrence striking down sodomy laws because it "demeans and stigmatizes" gay people held the promise of a new day, which was fulfilled just five months later with the Massachusetts marriage decision.

What's in store for 2004? The final battle is here. Like it or not, ready or not, the time is now. The Massachusetts marriage decision is different than its precursors in Hawaii and Alaska, in part because its state Constitution cannot be amended until after the deadline imposed by the court to start handing out marriage licenses, and also due in part to the change in non-gay attitudes following marriage in Canada, the historic civil rights tone of the Lawrence decision, Will & Grace, and some supportive Democratic presidential candidates.

The conservatives, after losing out on interracial marriage, no-fault divorce, birth control, and abortion, have now declared that continuing the heterosexual-only policy on civil marriage licenses is the final stand against the Apocalypse. The proposed Federal Marriage Amendment is the red button being pushed by panicked and desperate religious zealots to pull the plug on marriage for same-sex couples.

The major Democratic presidential candidates, secure in the belief that having a policy of antidiscrimination against gays and lesbians while holding firm against

marriage equality was a viable option, are now scrambling to hold on to the quicksand of this untenable middle position. The Massachusetts decision has crystallized the issue down to you either support full equality, or you stand against full equality for gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people.

What can we do to push the boulder over that last hurdle and get it to roll down the other side crushing the mantle of legalized homophobia in employment, housing, military service, and marriage?

First, do not compromise in your own language and conversations with non-gay people. Stop saying "my domestic partner" and start saying "spouse." So what if it is not yet legally accurate — what is the harm?

Second, don't sell the rest of us out. Domestic partnerships are not enough and neither are civil unions. Civil marriage is not a religious issue, it is a state sponsored contract that affords heterosexual couples access to hundreds of state rights and over a thousand federal rights. The proposed FMA threatens to undo the separation of church and state, a core value that has permitted our country to flourish.

Third, hold fast to discussing marriage at the family holiday gathering, be gentle or be firm, whatever your style, but don't give any ground on this issue. Bring your fiancé or spouse home for the holiday and gently correct the relatives when they refer to him/her as your "friend" or "roommate."

Finally, get engaged with all non-gay people. Talk about marriage with your neighbors, family, co-workers, and grocery clerk. Get them to donate money, time, and letters to the cause. Most non-gay people

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LETTERS

Loss of a community leader

We at Falcon Studios are deeply saddened by the news of Bob Ross's passing. He was a wonderful business partner to us over the years, and a great friend to me personally. I had the good fortune to meet Bob back in the early 1980s when I was dancing with the San Francisco Tap Troupe. From then on, Bob always seemed to be in the audience wherever we appeared, beginning what would become a long and close relationship that lasted until his death. Bob was also a longtime friend of Chuck Holmes, Falcon's founder, and used his business contacts and the B.A.R. to help bring greater acceptance of our business in the community at large. After Chuck's passing, Bob constantly supported our efforts to make life a little easier for others through the various charities that Falcon supported. On a personal note, I will remember Bob best for the colorful anecdotes he supplied about the owning and running the PS Restaurant and Casa de Crystal. Somehow he just never could figure out how all his waiters eventually made it into Falcon films. Bob was a great friend, an amazing businessman, and a humanitarian. I will never forget him.

Terry Mahaffey, President
Falcon Family of Companies
San Francisco

I remember Bob Ross

I worked for Bob Ross for roughly four and a half years from 1986 to midway through 1990. If I were to reminisce of the fond memories I have of Bob, I am sure he would command the gods to hurl lightning bolts from Valhalla at my word processor.

However, I am going to risk the wrath of Valhalla — surely an operatic location worthy of Bob Ross — to give the man his due. The GLBT community wouldn't be what it is today if it were not for this often gruff and more often brilliant man named Bob Ross.

Shortly after I became an associate editor at the *Bay Area Reporter*, Bob approached me and told me that one of my duties was to edit the obituary page. Anyone who has ever worked in mainstream journalism knows that writing obits is not glamorous journalism.

Bob, however, gave me an assignment that I came to know as an honor. The B.A.R. obit page may very well have been the supreme gift of therapy to our community in those early days when we were ravaged by AIDS.

"Don't be fancy, honey," Bob said with the gruff tone that only he could turn into sweet and sour sauce, "but just edit the obits for spelling and punctuation. Leave the gist of what their loved ones want to say about them the way they remember them."

For three years, I did just that, whether it was a life-long friend writing of his buddy who wore a T-shirt that proclaimed "Faggots are fantastic!" at a Gay Pride Parade or a retired Lutheran minister dropping off an obit on a rainy Saturday morning because "Paul's friends said this was the way they would know." Before I worked for the B.A.R., I worked for two dailies in the Midwest, but I learned the meaning of "community journalism" when I worked for Bob Ross.

I also remember an incident which revealed the power of the B.A.R. after less than two decades in business. We printed an article about a research group hired by the Republicans. We quoted one of the researchers who said how "embarrassing" Representative William Dannemeyer — then a rabidly antigay congressman from Southern California — was to the party.

A few days after the article appeared, we received a call late in the afternoon. For 10 minutes, Dannemeyer railed at 10,000 decibels at our receptionist, Ann West. The "Mister Bluster" of Congress had learned that Bob Ross's paper had some clout.

Anyone who has ever seen the B.A.R. in its early existence knew the paper had come a long way from the days when it reported bar gossip. Whether it was about politics or medicine or entertainment or yes, obits, bare chests, and full-length gowns, the B.A.R. had become the complete example of a community newspaper.

We all owe a lot to you, Bob.

Will Snyder
San Francisco

Bob Ross remembered

Bob was a cherished part of San Francisco. His vision, integrity, talent, and ability gave focus to the LGBT movement as he realized the potential strength. He was a leader in so many areas, AIDS, the Federation of Gay Games, and the Tavern Guild, which continues to serve all of us through the Community Thrift Store. He embraced other causes such as the San Francisco Ballet and Meals on Wheels.

He was a strong man, a decisive man, a man of loyalty to friends and ideas. He was always there when he was needed. I recall one of the first Gay Pride Parades when he escorted us in his convertible to be in the forefront of the day. Bob and my husband, the late Senator Milton Marks, discussed LGBT legislation throughout the early pioneering days of my husband's

legislative tenure. He knew that Bob had the pulse of the community and the wisdom to lead.

I rejoice in Bob's life. He knew what to do. He did it in courageous fashion.

Others can also write about his manifold accomplishments. For me my cherished memory is of our friend who was ever a loyal friend, part of our family. Such a personal relationship is especially meaningful for all of us in political life. My children felt this bond from their earliest days. Each of them, Milton, Carol, and David join me in shared sorrow. We shall hold him in our hearts as we follow his example in community service.

In the Jewish religion when a fine person dies, we say, "May he (or she) be inscribed for blessing." May Bob be so inscribed.

Carolene Marks
San Francisco

Democrats must change

As the National Democratic Party celebrates the victory of Gavin Newsom and the local media describes him as a "rising star," I think it's very important to note that the majority of San Francisco Democrats voted for Matt Gonzalez. It's clear that the margin of victory can be credited to the city's Republicans, who overwhelmingly supported Gavin Newsom. This is not something the Democratic leaders should be proud of.

Although Gavin's status has been elevated, he lacks a local mandate within his own party, and thus, he may be standing on a house of cards. Meanwhile, frustrated progressive Democrats will continue to leave the party in disgust. If the Democrats want to stop this attrition, they need to stand behind candidates who more fully represent the values of the whole party.

Tom Scott
San Francisco

Next time, vote absentee

Advice to my fellow queer supporters of Matt Gonzalez: next time, please vote absentee.

Gavin Newsom gained many votes, perhaps his winning 5 percent, by encouraging supporters to do so.

Anyone who voted by mail, or who voted early at City Hall, wasn't discouraged by the bad weather on December 9, by needing to figure out the boundaries of their precinct, by searching for their correct (and perhaps obscure) polling place, by having to carve time out of a busy Tuesday, by having to stand in line, etc. "Absentee" is Latin for "less hassle, more success."

So all queers, and all progressives, should get permanent absentee voter status. Under a new California law, you don't need a reason. Any voter can sign up to have a ballot mailed to them, automatically, for all future elections. You can mail it back in the postpaid envelope, or deliver it early to City Hall, or drop it off at any polling place (while bypassing any line of waiting voters).

If more of us get permanent absentee status, politicians will know we're more likely to succeed in actually voting (as contrasted with merely "intending" to vote). The two groups who have the highest voting rates are senior citizens and absentee voters. If you join the latter group, you'll be more effective as a citizen.

Tortuga Bi Liberty
San Francisco

Glad Matt didn't win

Many thanks to the voters of San Francisco for wisely rejecting the candidacy of avowed Marxist Comrade Matt Gonzalez. If he had emerged victorious, one wonders after whom he would have styled his leadership — Lenin, Stalin or Pol Pot.

John M. Farrell
San Francisco

Holiday treat

One evening last week between seasonal rain showers, I noticed something unusual at the top of the stairs by the Harvey Milk Plaza Muni station in the Castro. An artist was setting up racks to display his art. I talked to him — apparently there is a temporary program during the holiday season to allow artists with permits to have space in the Castro. His name is Vernon Viehe, and he is a photographer. His work includes images of San Francisco, including unusual compositions based on local architecture — which in some cases he has mirrored to produce a kaleidoscopic effect. Many of the works he had available included imagery from the Castro — in fact, he lives in the neighborhood. While he has a Web site at www.vernv.com, he had many more images available in his display on the plaza. And I was surprised at how low he had the photos priced. I couldn't resist buying a picture of an unconventional angle of the Transamerica Pyramid.

I think that making this area available to artists is a great use of public space, and promotes interaction and community feeling. I am hopeful that this can be not just a seasonal feature.

Larry-bob Roberts
San Francisco

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Jim Hedges

The rest of the stories

by Paula Martinac

With all the high-profile gay triumphs of the past year, it's clear we'll be talking about 2003 for a long time. After all, it was the year of *Lawrence v. Texas*, of Bishop Gene Robinson, and of the Massachusetts marriage decision. However, there were many other significant news stories that didn't grab headlines, but that hold great hope for the ultimate success of the gay movement.

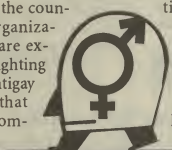
1. With the historic news from Canada and Massachusetts about gay marriage, it was easy to overlook a significant domestic partnership measure that passed this year. In November, the citizens of Cleveland Heights, Ohio, overwhelmingly voted in favor of creating a local domestic partners registry. What's the big deal? The registry was created through a voter initiative, not by the city council, marking the first time ever that a pro-gay ballot initiative passed anywhere in the country. Usually gay organizations and activists are expending resources fighting off the ubiquitous antigay ballot initiatives that have plagued our community. But the local group Heights Families for Equality, with support from the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, built a coalition of both gay and straight volunteers and took the important issue of lesbian and gay family recognition directly to the people of Cleveland Heights—and won.

2. Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund scored a major triumph and garnered a lot of publicity last June when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down sodomy laws. But Lambda Legal wins smaller cases all the time, and these may also have wide ramifications. Just this fall Lambda successfully settled a suit against the state of Georgia and the United Methodist Children's Home in Decatur. The Methodist home had been using state taxpayer dollars for its social service work, then discriminating in its hiring policies against both gay people and Jews. The settlement—

in which the state agreed not to fund religious groups that discriminate and the home committed to a nondiscrimination policy—will have a significant impact on the debate over President Bush's controversial and problematic "faith-based initiatives."

3. You may have read about another Lambda suit, the employment discrimination case against Cirque du Soleil filed this summer on behalf of Matthew Cusick, an HIV-positive gymnast. But Lambda had a much smaller HIV-related triumph this year. After Cecil Little, a 50-year-old Louisiana stroke victim, was discharged from the hospital, six nearby nursing homes turned him down for admittance because he is HIV-positive. Little had to enter a home 160 miles away, making it difficult for family members to visit him. Faced with a Lambda suit and an investigation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one of the six facilities finally agreed to admit Little—a small, personal victory for him and his family. But Lambda sees nursing home discrimination as a growing national problem, one that will become more acute as people with HIV continue to live longer and gay baby boomers reach their senior years.

4. There's been a lot of attention paid to polls showing African Americans overwhelmingly opposed to same-sex marriage rights because of religious beliefs. But we hear almost nothing when important alliances are formed between the African American and gay communities. This past summer, on the 40th anniversary of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech in Washington, D.C., NGLTF Executive



Transmissions

with a Lambda suit and an investigation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, one of the six facilities finally agreed to admit Little—a small, personal victory for him and his family. But Lambda sees nursing home discrimination as a growing national problem, one that will become more acute as people with HIV continue to live longer and gay baby boomers reach their senior years.

Director Matt Foreman was called on to speak at the rally on behalf of the GLBT community. This historic invitation recognized the important role that Bayard Rustin, a gay man, played in organizing the 1963 March on Washington. 5. The introduction of the Republican-sponsored Federal Marriage Amendment into Congress may make us forget that we

have staunch allies on both sides of the aisle. This fall Representative Christopher Shays (R-Connecticut) joined Representative Tom Lantos (D-California) to introduce a bipartisan resolution condemning human-rights violations based on sexual orientation or gender identity. The resolution would augment the Universal Declaration of Human Rights passed by the United Nations in 1948—a policy ignored in scores of countries around the globe when it comes to GLBT people, who may be imprisoned, tortured, or even executed simply for having consensual adult sex. This attempt to extend the resolution to include queer people is recognition that "the United States has a tremendous responsibility to speak out and protect those who may not be able to protect themselves," said a Human Rights Campaign spokesperson.

These are just five stories many of us missed while we were celebrating the year's landmarks. They indicate that the geography of gay rights is made up not just of incredible peaks, but of many smaller hills that also offer a view to the future. ▼

Paula Martinac is a Lambda Literary Award-winning author of eight books and editor in chief of Q Syndicate. She can be reached care of this publication or at PMcolumn@aol.com.

Holiday gala benefits LHRC



The Lesbian Health Research Center at the University of California, San Francisco held a holiday benefit gala dinner and dance party Saturday, December 13 at the Ramada Hotel in San Francisco. From left, co-directors Suzanne Dibble, RN and Dr. Patricia Robertson; co-founder Dixie Horning; Supervisor Bevan Duffy; and Jan Corlett, Ph.D., co-chair of the LHRC Community Leadership Circle. The center's mission is to enhance clinical practice and inform policy about the health care needs of and delivery of services to lesbians, bisexual women, and transgenders through research, postgraduate education and training, and public service. For more information, visit www.lesbianhealthinfo.org.

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POLITICS



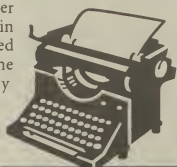
Bob Ross, left, and Wayne Friday in Sacramento in 1978 during a march against the Briggs initiative that would have banned gays from being teachers. The measure went down to defeat in November 1978, just weeks before Supervisor Harvey Milk was murdered.

Newsom keeps S.F. in Democratic hands

by Wayne Friday

Though last week's mayoral runoff election was closer than some had expected, Democrat **Gavin Newsom** scored a comfortable 5-percentage point win over Green Party candidate **Matt Gonzalez** and San Francisco is still a very Democratic city.

Clearly, the Gonzalez campaign can claim a victory of sorts in that the 20-point edge that Newsom had after the general election in November was reduced dramatically, but the 15,000 vote plurality was by no means the closest San Francisco mayoral race in recent history since the late Mayor George



Our Man Friday

Moscone defeated his Republican challenger, **John Barbagelata**, by only 4,000 votes some 26 years ago. The Newsom campaign was clearly better organized, much better financed, and the results last Tuesday showed that organization and money will trump political fervor, or "buzz" as political writers insist on calling it, every time.

Board of Supervisors President Gonzalez and his supporters, however, can indeed take pride in a campaign that was put together quickly, underfunded badly, and still managed to come within 6 percentage points of pulling an upset.

Can Newsom govern successfully after such a divided election? Of course he can, and I have no doubt that he will. Mayor-elect Newsom should sit down — soon — with his defeated opponent and seriously discuss where he and the board president want this city to go; Gonzalez has a lot to offer the new mayor and Newsom would be smart to listen to him and his ideas.

Gonzalez truly ran a very impressive campaign but in the end one had the feeling that all of

those thousands of house signs that appeared suddenly, the cars strategically placed on street corners and near voting places, and the roaming band of young Green Party imports carrying his signs somehow gave a false impression of a groundswell.

Newsom and the Democrats won and Gonzalez and his Green party lost, but both can be proud of the campaigns they undertook and, particularly of the gracious election night statement both men made. Gonzalez was truly cool as he thanked his supporters and promised to "work with the new mayor when he agreed with him" and to speak out when he disagreed; and that is as it probably should be. Both are bright young men who

have much to offer San Francisco.

The board colleagues who supported Gonzalez were also extending their hands to the mayor-elect, particularly **Gerardo Sandoval**, who told reporters on election night that "most of us are open to working with the new mayor ... none of us want to be spending our time at City Hall if nothing is going to get done." Sandoval acknowledged that both the Board of Supervisors and the mayor's office had a common goal by saying, "It's impossible to achieve much without the board's cooperation," and promised his support of the new mayor.

Though only two of Newsom's colleagues — Supervisors **Bevan Dufty** and **Fiona Ma** — endorsed his candidacy, cooperation with the new mayor was clearly on the minds of the supervisors, with the possible exception of the seemingly ever-angry **Chris Daly**, who addressed the Gonzalez election night crowd by angrily bellowing, "If he [Newsom] wants to give big breaks to downtown businesses, if he wants to scapegoat immigrants and the poor, we'll take his legs out." That, however, is pretty

much what most of San Francisco has come to expect of Daly.

On the subject of his fellow supervisors, I suspect that a couple of them are seriously considering re-registering with the Green Party; it would be the honest thing to do. Other "loyal" longtime Democrats also bolted to the Green Party and it hasn't gone unnoticed that former Mayor **Art Agnos**, once a Democratic Party powerhouse in Sacramento, publicly endorsed the Green Party candidate (though it's questionable how much that one mattered). Former S.F. County Democratic chairperson **Carole Migden** clearly snubbed Democrat Newsom (and marched in the recent Milk-Moscone candlelight memorial with Gonzalez) but Migden is safely headed for a state Senate seat and will no doubt remain a loyal Democrat. Migden is a smart (and very effective) politician and some who know her say she was merely "playing it safe" by trying to appease the Milk Democrat-ic/Green Club.

Still, Gonzalez clearly picked up the votes of many, many Democrats in this heavily-Democratic city as the Green Party's registration the last time I checked was somewhere around 4 percent. Is San Francisco about to become a hot-bed for the Green Party? I doubt it.

District Attorney **Terence Hallinan**, who reportedly was heard saying to reporters recently, "To hell with the Democratic Party," went down to a decisive defeat at the hands of a former prosecutor, Deputy City Attorney **Kamala Harris**, and the talented Harris not only defeated the hapless Hallinan, she trumped him by more than 31,000 votes, or 13 percentage points. Harris ran a good campaign, was clearly the better candidate, and in the end even negative campaigning, the help of **Heidi Fleiss** (what was that about?), and a last-minute endorsement of sorts in the form of a door-hanger from **Bill Fazio**

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






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Who was Edith Piaf?

by Liz Highleyman

December 19, 1915 (88 years ago this week): Chanteuse Edith Piaf is born in Paris.

French chanteuse Edith Piaf—often called “the Little Sparrow”—gained renown as one of the most famous singers of her era. And, like other tragic female divas, Piaf has been regarded as an icon by many gay men.

Piaf—nee Edith Giovanna Gassion—claimed she was born on a street corner in Paris’ Belleville neighborhood in December 1915. She was neglected by her mother, a café and street singer and sometime prostitute. Her father, a traveling acrobat, arranged for young Edith to live with his mother, who worked in a Normandy brothel, until she reached the age of 7, when he made her part of his act. At 15, Piaf struck out with her half-sister, Simone Bertheaut, singing in the streets of Paris for money. The teenage Piaf became pregnant and

gave birth to a daughter, who died of meningitis at age 2.

In 1935, Louis Leplée, the proprietor of an elegant Champs Elysées nightclub, discovered Piaf singing in the street and coaxed her onto the stage despite her shyness. The tiny woman with the huge voice soon captured the hearts of Parisians with her poignant ballads. The following year, Leplée was murdered, and Piaf, along with other denizens of the criminal underworld with whom she associated, was briefly considered a suspect.

With the club closed, Piaf began an affair with an aspiring musician who helped her secure work at some of Paris’ most prestigious music halls. She later took up with Paul Meurisse, a young singer who introduced her to the upper-class, intellectual milieu. She became friends with celebrities such as actor Maurice Chevalier and playwright Jean Cocteau, who in 1940 wrote a play for Piaf based on her stormy rela-

tionship with Meurisse.

World War II had a profound effect on the artistic scene in Paris. Once the Nazis occupied France, all performers were required to have their material approved by German censors. Piaf was popular among the Germans, performing for high-ranking officers and entertaining members of the Gestapo at her apartment. Some Parisian antifascists felt she was too popular and suspected her of collaboration, but she claimed to be part of the resistance and helped at least one person, Jewish composer Michel Emer, escape occupied France.

Hugely famous by the war’s end, Piaf began a series of relationships with younger men, playing the role of mentor as well as lover. Among these were actor Yves Montand, who met Piaf when they were both performing at the Moulin Rouge. In 1946-47, Piaf first toured the United States where—after an initially cool reception—she soon took the country by storm. She befriended celebrities such as Orson Welles, Judy Garland, and Marlene Dietrich, who remained a friend for life and was reputedly her lover.

In 1949, another of Piaf’s lovers, a Moroccan boxer, was killed in a plane crash, and beset by grief, she turned to alcohol. Further misfortune followed two years later when Piaf was involved in an automobile accident. Although her injuries healed, she became addicted to morphine. She began performing under the in-



Edith Piaf

fluence of alcohol and drugs, sometimes injecting herself through her clothes before taking the stage. “During these periods there was within me a kind of invincible need to destroy myself,” she later wrote. “Then, when I had sunk to the bottom of my abyss, when everyone thought I was lost, suddenly I would find within myself the will to climb up the slope again.”

Despite her troubles, Piaf continued her successful singing and acting career throughout the 1950s. Although she collapsed on stage several times, she also gave many stunning performances. Piaf also continued her long string of love affairs, and, at age 47, scandalized French society by marrying an up-and-coming Greek singer 20 years her junior.

Even as her health failed, Piaf refused to give up her work, performing until the year before her death. “For me, singing is a way of escaping,” she explained. In October 1963, Piaf succumbed to cancer. Although the Catholic Church denied her a religious service,

thousands of mourners joined Piaf’s funeral procession, and her grave is among the most visited at Paris’ Père Lachaise cemetery.

Piaf always had a strong cult following, and many of her most devoted fans have been gay men who both admired her glamour and identified with the pathos and resilience she embodied. In the days before Stonewall, the diva was “the homosexual’s proxy,” writes gay cultural critic Daniel Harris, “offering them a tough-as-nails persona they can assume like a mask during emotionally trying experiences.”

Piaf’s music remains popular to this day, and the name of her best-known song, “Non, je ne regrette rien” (“No Regrets”), was adopted as the title of a 1992 film by Marlon Riggs about black men and AIDS. ▼

Liz Highleyman is a freelance writer and editor who has written widely on health, sexuality, and politics. She can be reached care of this publication or at PastOut@black-rose.com.

Suggested reading

Bertheaut, Simone. 1969. *Piaf* (Harper and Row).
Harris, Daniel. 1997. *The Rise and Fall of Gay Culture* (Hyperion).
Piaf, Edith, Jean Noli, and Margaret Crosland. 1995. *My Life* (Peter Owens).



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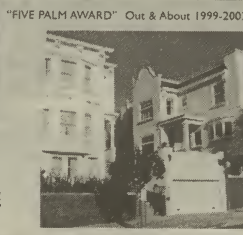
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Our Man Friday

◀ previous page

(talk about sore losers) couldn't pull "Kayo" through this time. Harris, a huge winner last week, will be just what the San Francisco District Attorney's office needs after eight years of Hallinan destroying that important office and she takes over the job with a clear mandate from the city's voters.

Congratulations are clearly the order of the day for both Gavin Newsom and Kamala Harris—last week's big winners—but a special nod to Matt Gonzalez for running a good campaign and taking his defeat with grace; had Gonzalez remained a Democrat in this heavily-Democratic city he might very well have won the election.

Politics and people

California's new first lady, **Maria Shriver**, left little doubt about she really thinks of Sacramento when she told a luncheon group of some 250 women last week in the capital city that she and the governor have no plans to move their family to Sacramento any time soon. Shriver lamented the absence of a home for the governor by complaining that, "Even if I were going to move here, I have nowhere to move to," adding that, "in all honesty, I don't see myself moving here, taking my kids out of school. What I do plan on doing is coming here hopefully once or twice a week." Don't blame you, Maria, we'd all prefer a mansion in Beverly Hills to living in Sacramento. As for Governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger**, he has to make do with a 2,000-square-foot presidential suite at the Hyatt Regency Hotel while he is in the capital.

City Hall was already specu-

lating as to who Mayor-elect Gavin Newsom will appoint to his District 2 seat when he takes over Room 200; some close to the new mayor say that **Janet Reilly** would probably be a popular choice while **Meagan Levitan** probably wouldn't be.

And yes, I know about Matt Gonzalez reportedly insisting that instead of being a true Greenie, he's actually a Marxist. According to the *San Francisco Independent's* political columnist **Samson Wong**, Gonzalez wrote a Valentine's Day poem entitled "My Green Manifesto" in which he apparently wrote these lines: "I shall vote Green because I love the Socialists" and "I shall vote Green because I read *The Communist Manifesto* and liked it." Say what, Matt? Hey, we need not point out that Karl Marx wrote *The Communist Manifesto*, so if Supervisor Gonzalez wants to be a Marxist, who are we to argue—and you think this isn't a city of strange politics?

While Governor Schwarzenegger showed his skills at cutting political deals in getting his revived fiscal plan on the March ballot, the guy clearly blinked in the budget confrontation with the Democratic-controlled Legislature, and pretty much ignored the Republican legislative leaders. Unlike the Assembly, which had unanimously endorsed the \$15 billion budget plan, the state Senate's assent came without a vote to spare. All of the state senate's 25 Democrats backed Schwarzenegger's plan, joined only by Senate GOP leader **Jim Brulte** (Rancho Cucamonga) and **Richard Ackerman** (Irvine), who is expected to replace Brulte as party leader next year. Twelve Republican senators voted no, with one, Senator **William "Pete" Knight** (Palm-

dale), abstaining.

During an appearance in San Francisco last week, Democratic presidential candidate Senator **John Edwards** of North Carolina sidestepped an audience question about gay marriage, obviously a high-profile issue in a city where gays and lesbians hold a lot of political power and cultural influence. Edwards said the military's "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy needs a "real look" and that laws barring discrimination and hate crimes against gays should be enacted. Later, Edwards told reporters he opposes gay marriage but believes states should have the power to institute it if they desire; he also said he supports civil unions for same-gender couples and opposes a constitutional amendment banning gay marriages.

Bob Ross

The gay rights movement lost a monumental figure last week with the death of *Bay Area Reporter* publisher Bob Ross, and I lost a friend of 33 years. Bob was many things to many people; to me, he was a mentor, a good friend, a person with whom I often disagreed, but a man who remained a friend through the best and worst of times. If you gained Bob Ross's inner friendship, the man would put his hand in the fire for you. It was Bob who first introduced me to Harvey Milk back in 1973, during Milk's first run for supervisor, and I retained his friendship ever since. Being Bob's friend wasn't always easy, but it was always worth the effort. He was a hell of a man, and few will probably ever know all that he did for our community. I will miss him very much. Rest peacefully, Bob.

And how was your week? ▼

Steals on wheels

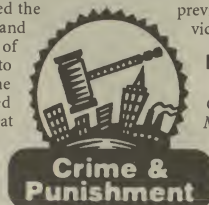
by Jane Warner

Diesel clothing, Market and Castro, and All American Boy, 463 Castro, December 11, 1:51 p.m.: On several different occasions, a man using a getaway skateboard allegedly shoplifted from Diesel clothing in the Castro. The suspect—described as a white male in his 30s, wearing baggy clothing—would enter the store, grab an armful of goods, and then skate out the door before anyone could stop him. To the great frustration of the staff, the man was able to do this four separate times, stealing over \$4,000 worth of clothing. On December 11, however, the manager spotted the suspect lingering outside the store and called 911. Hearing the police broadcast, an officer on routine patrol near 18th and Castro saw the shoplifter skate eastbound on 18th with an armful of jackets.

The suspect ignored the officer's commands to stop and continued skating toward Noe Street. The officer radioed for backup and chased the fleeing suspect on foot. Several other officers responded and apprehended the thief at Church and 18th. The manager of Diesel was brought to the scene, where she positively identified the man as her repeat thief. The jackets, however, did not belong to Diesel. "Great," said the officer, "now I don't know who these jackets belong to."

"I took them from the store next to Cliff's," the thief offered. The jackets were shown to a clerk at All American Boy, a clothing store next to Cliff's Variety Store, who identified them as belonging to the store. The clerk said the

jackets were hanging on rack outside the store. The suspect, 30, was taken to Mission Station and booked for numerous counts of theft. A computer check revealed he was on probation for six previous shoplifting convictions.



Family outing

The Cafe, and Chevron, 2300 block of Market Street, December 14, 1:40 a.m.:

While inside the Cafe bar, a woman was approached by her ex-girlfriend who told her she wanted to talk. When the woman declined to have a conversation, the ex grabbed her by the arm, and a pushing match ensued. Several of the woman's friends intervened and the disgruntled ex left the bar. A short time later, however, she returned with her older brother

who approached the woman and her friends and allegedly began to fight again. The bar staff broke up the scuffle and escorted them outside as the bar was closing. While patrons from the bar lingered outside after closing, the woman's brother drove into Chevron's parking lot in a red Saturn, with his sister in the passenger seat, and began to rev the engine. "I'm going to kill you motherfuckers," he screamed out the window of the car, then drove at a reckless speed directly toward the crowd of people. As several people ran for cover, the suspect struck two men he had fought with inside the bar with the bumper of his vehicle. Both men fell to the pavement and the suspect sped out of the gas station, driving eastbound on Market. Several people called 911 on their cell phones, and the suspect returned a few minutes later, again chasing people with his car. At one point, a man tried to stop

the driver by reaching in through the window, but he was thrown from the vehicle, and the suspect drove off at a high rate of speed eastbound on Market. Responding police gave chase and pulled the car over at Market and Gough. The suspect, 27, and his sister, 22, were booked for three counts of battery, two counts of aggravated assault with a vehicle, and criminal threats.

Tooled box

Red Grill, 4063 18th Street, December 13, 9 a.m.: The owner of the restaurant arrived at work in the morning and found the upstairs office door pried open. As he entered the room, he discovered it had been ransacked and the safe had been pulled away from the wall. The door to the safe had been removed and a crowbar was nearby. The owner estimated that two day's worth of receipts and a large amount of petty cash was missing. The owner went downstairs to talk with his kitchen staff members, who were unaware of the break-in as they had not gone upstairs. They told the owner that when they arrived for work in the morning, the rear gate was slightly ajar. The owner called police, and responding officers dusted for fingerprints. There are no known suspects. ▼

Study finds HAART reduces HIV transmission by 60 percent

by Matthew S. Bajko

The introduction and widespread use of highly active antiretroviral therapy (HAART) for HIV-infected persons in San Francisco in the late 1990s reduced their risks of infecting partners by 60 percent, according to a study conducted by researchers from the San Francisco Department of Public Health and the University of California, San Francisco.

"While we found that antiretroviral use alone may account for a 60 percent reduction in risk of HIV transmission, a concurrent increase in risk behavior meant that rates of new infections did not decline sharply, but remained roughly stable for the period studied," said study lead investigator Travis Porco, the senior epidemiologist with the surveillance and epidemiology section of the Tuberculosis Control Branch of the California Department of Health Services. At the time the study was conducted, Porco was an epidemiologist with DPH.

The study results bolster arguments made by AIDS activists that federal and state governments need to fully fund ADAP, the AIDS Drug Assistance Program. Congress has failed to adequately fund the program for years.

As of December, 16 states had

imposed waiting lists for their ADAP programs. California activists are already using the study to fight Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposal to cap ADAP enrollment.

"It will definitely be at the cornerstone of our arguments as we ask the governor and Legislature for funding," said Dana Van Gorder, director of state and local affairs for the San Francisco AIDS Foundation.

"We have always argued with respect to ADAP that funding it was not only important to preserving lives of those infected but also played an important role in prevention," said Van Gorder. "But we have not had quality data to prove it. This study provides the data to back up our argument."

The study, to be published in the January 2, 2004 issue of *AIDS*, analyzed data from 1994 to 1999 from the San Francisco Young Men's Health Study, which followed young gay men who were initially uninfected with HIV. Participants were asked about their sexual practices and tested for HIV at four follow-up visits, which included two before the widespread introduction of HAART for people with HIV in San Francisco and two later visits.

The study estimated the chances that a HIV-uninfected person would become infected by a sexual partner after factoring in

sexual practice and condom use. Researchers found a per partnership decline of 60 percent in risk of becoming infected that occurred following the introduction and the widespread use of HAART by HIV-infected persons

in San Francisco.

"The important thing to note here is nobody has had any estimate as to how treatment might play out in reducing infection rates in a community. Sixty per-

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free pass to engage in what otherwise would be unlawful discrimination," she added.

Representatives from Adoption.com were not able to comment on the lawsuit at press time.

Neel Chatterjee, a partner at Orrick, noted that in the end, it is children and parents of all kinds who are hurt by such narrow definitions of what makes a suitable family.

"We seek to end the policy of excluding members of the gay and lesbian community from equal access to Adoption.com's services.

These discriminatory practices do not serve the interests of children or biological parents looking for suitable adoptive parents in California," said Chatterjee.

In the meantime, the Butlers have a personal Web site at www.butlerfamily.com where those looking to give their child up for adoption can learn more about the Butler's own family values.

"Thank you for taking the time in getting to know us. We share your hopes for your child and admire your courage in making this difficult decision," states the Butlers' site. "We understand that you do this with a great love and selfless desire to provide your child with the best possible home." ▼



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Friends, colleagues remember Bob Ross

by Cynthia Laird

Whether it was fighting for equal rights for gays and lesbians or helping guide government and charitable organizations, *Bay Area Reporter* publisher Bob Ross cut a wide path during his more than 40 years in San Francisco, friends and colleagues agree. Not only did he publish one of the country's oldest and largest gay newspapers, but he was involved in numerous charities and served on various civic organizations.

Mr. Ross died December 10 of complications from diabetes. He was 69.

Outside of the newspaper, one of Mr. Ross's cherished jobs was his 18-year tenure on the board of the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway, and Transportation District, including a two-year stint as president of the board. He was first appointed by the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in March 1983 and served until March 2001.

"Bob has this unusual legacy here," said Celia Kupersmith, general manager of the bridge district. "The general manager prior [to myself] retired in 1998 and Bob was involved in leading the hiring search for a new general manager."

"A year later, the CFO, district engineer, and district secretary re-

tired, so that was four senior, senior officers that the board had to replace and Bob Ross led the efforts to hire every one of us. It was a huge effort. The senior management that had been stable for 15 years turned over in 18 months," Kupersmith said.

She credited Mr. Ross with "going a different way" in the hiring process.

"The district had never had a woman in senior management and Bob led that," she said.

She said Mr. Ross also wanted to hear about new ideas. "He would say something like 'We have to have new ideas. I want new ideas.' I heard that speech from him many times."

Another important legacy he left the bridge district, Kupersmith said, was his insistence that the district be fiscally responsible.

"The district hadn't always been that way," she recalled. "At the end of the 1990s he led efforts to develop a strategic plan. He saw the fiscal crisis coming."

Since Mr. Ross left the district's board two years ago, the bridge board has had to institute service reductions and fare increases to grapple with its budget deficit.

"When the hard times hit, we were so much better prepared," said Kupersmith.

As part of his duties as a bridge district director, Mr. Ross was also involved with transportation issues at the national level, lobbying



B.A.R. publisher Bob Ross, right, talks with former San Mateo County Supervisor and current Project Open Hand Executive Director Tom Nolan, left, and U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein.

politicians in Washington, D.C. and attending annual transportation meetings.

"Whether it was bus issues or ferry transportation issues, he was out there pushing things from a national perspective," Kupersmith said.

In the world of gay publishing, one of Mr. Ross's colleagues was Mark Segal, publisher of the *Philadelphia Gay News*. In an e-mail message, Segal fondly recalled Mr. Ross.

"Bob and I worked together in numerous press organizations over the past 20 years, and on most issues, we were allies," Segal said. "But if you were Bob's friend, you often found yourself debating. Those debates with Bob were passionate, and often brought a compromise that enriched our community."

"San Francisco has lost a leader, the Golden Gate Bridge its champion, and the gay press one of its pioneers. But I have lost a dear friend whose memory I'll cherish, and whose raspy, cantankerous style will always be with me."

Mr. Ross was involved with the

Imperial Council of San Francisco, and was chosen Emperor VII in 1978. Absolute Empress XXV Marlana, owner of Marlana's bar and a longtime friend of Mr. Ross's, expressed sadness at his death.

"He was just a great, great friend," Marlana told the *B.A.R.* "We'd been friends for 25 years and he was one of those people in my life that I loved and respected. I really loved him and I'm going to miss him."

San Francisco Superior Court Judge Kay Tsenin, another longtime friend, pointed to Mr. Ross's love for the city.

"He did things because they needed to be done, or they needed support, or they needed money," Tsenin told the *B.A.R.*

Mr. Ross, Tsenin said, operated on the philosophy that "you don't just have a right to live here, you have to make it better."

"I think he gave a tremendous amount to all of San Francisco, it was not limited to the gay community, but to the city as a whole," she added.

Dennis Conkin was the first

full-time staff reporter Mr. Ross hired in 1992. Conkin, an award-winning investigative reporter, initially turned down the job.

"Bob had asked me a few years earlier and I said no, wanting to remain a freelancer," Conkin said. "Economically, that was one of the stupidest decisions I've ever made. But, young and foolish, I wanted my hippie independence. I knew instantly that I'd made the wrong decision. He just sort of cocked his eye at me and flatly refused to bring it up again for a couple of years. I made a couple of hints about having changed my mind but to no avail."

"I practically lived in the newsroom by that time anyway, but I kept on making freelancer's wages. When he finally brought it up again, of course I said yes. Nothing changed, it was the same old reporter's life, except I got a business card and a weekly paycheck I could live on."

Conkin retired from the paper in 1997 and now works as an aide to Supervisor Bevan Duffy. But he remembered Mr. Ross's famous temper.

"He didn't suffer fools and could come across like a real jerk sometimes. Cranky, opinionated, outrageous. Some of it surely must have been the blood-sugar thing. But we all loved 'Mother,' as we called him, and we'd just roll our eyes, grit our teeth, and keep on working. We had a community to serve and he knew it."

"In the long run, the paper wasn't about any of us, it was about the community that we all care about so much. It's a tremendous, deep, and very personal loss for me." ▼



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IN MEMORIAM

Bob Ross

◀ page 1

er and owner.

Over the years, the newspaper grew in stature and influence within the local and national gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities. During the early years of the AIDS epidemic, the B.A.R. was often the only source of news about the disease before it was covered in mainstream publications. The newspaper became famous for running obituaries of those who had died of the disease, and on August 13, 1998, ran a front-page story headlined "No obits" when, for the first time since the epidemic started, there were no obituaries in that week's issue. That news was reported in media outlets across the country.

It was fitting that the paper's initials were B.A.R., as the paper was first distributed in the city's gay bars.

"Gay bars – when they weren't being raided – were the one place where everyone could meet and be themselves," Mr. Ross said in a 2001 interview with the B.A.R.

Mr. Ross supported the late Supervisor Harvey Milk during Milk's political campaigns, and raised money for Milk by hosting auctions.

Wayne Friday, the B.A.R.'s political columnist, and a friend of Mr. Ross's for more than 30 years, noted that Mr. Ross started his career in San Francisco as a chef at the old PS Restaurant on Polk Street. Mr. Ross also worked at a couple of other restaurants, Friday said.

Marcus Hernandez, the B.A.R.'s leather columnist, recounted that Mr. Ross was a member of the old Barbary Coasters motorcycle club, and that was how he started his involvement in the leather community.

"Every year the Barbary Coasters would have a weekend run and he'd cook the meals," Hernandez said.

Mr. Ross was crowned Emperor VII in September 1978 by the Imperial Council of San Francisco, a social and fundraising organization.

It was because Mr. Ross was Emperor that then-Mayor Dianne Feinstein would not appoint him to Milk's seat after the gay supervisor was assassinated on November 27, 1978.

In the immediate aftermath of Milk's murder, Mr. Ross and author Frank Robinson were named by Milk in his famous taped "political will" as people whom the mayor should appoint to succeed him, should he die in office. Milk also mentioned Anne Kronenberg and Harry Britt.

"I wanted the job," Ross said in an interview earlier this year. "Dianne could not appoint me because I was Emperor, so she put Harry in. The day we buried Harvey at sea, the ship pulled in and Harry jumped off the ship – he was going to see Dianne."

Mr. Ross sometimes thought about what would have happened had he been named to replace Milk as supervisor.

"I've often wondered what would have happened," Mr. Ross said earlier this year. "Would I still be involved with the paper? Would I have gone off on a political path? Who knows?"

Even those who were often at odds with Mr. Ross recognize his contributions to the community.

"We had our differences," rainbow flag creator Gilbert Baker told the B.A.R. last week. "But he was a huge hero."

Robert Haaland, president of the Harvey Milk LGBT Democratic Club, told the B.A.R. that while



Emperor VII After Norton Bob Ross, left, escorts Absolute Empress XIV Ginger down the aisle at Ginger's coronation on February 4, 1979.

the club often disagreed with Mr. Ross's politics, he appreciated the newspaper.

"It's an invaluable contribution to the community to have a newspaper that focuses on our issues that are often ignored in the mainstream media," Haaland said.

Cleve Jones, founder of the Names Project AIDS Memorial Quilt, said that he and Mr. Ross "argued about everything."

"It really is the end of an era," Jones said.

Paper will continue

Horn told the B.A.R. Tuesday, December 16 that the corporation that owns the paper, Benro Enterprises, is a part of the living trust established by Mr. Ross.

"The trust will continue to operate the paper," Horn said, "and any benefits or profits will go to Bob's foundation."

The Bob Ross Foundation was set up years ago and served as the vehicle through which Mr. Ross made his charitable contributions.

"Bob left his entire estate to his private foundation," Horn explained. "What Bob didn't need in life he gave away, and in death he gave it all away."

"It will probably take one year to administer Bob's estate but ultimately all assets will end up in the foundation and be used strictly for charitable purposes."

Horn said that legally, nothing has changed.

Horn said that Mr. Ross gave generously to various gay organizations, as well as the San Francisco Ballet, Meals on Wheels, and the Episcopal homeless shelter, to

name a few beneficiaries.

Charitable work

In addition to the newspaper, Mr. Ross was involved in numerous organizations. He was a founding member of the Council on Religion and the Homosexual, and the Society for Individual Rights, both early groups that sought to increase civil rights for gays and lesbians. A friend of lesbian pioneers Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon, Mr. Ross was made an honorary member of their organization, the Daughters of Bilitis.

"We weren't very close these last few years, but he was very helpful in the early days," Lyon told the B.A.R.

Lyon said that Mr. Ross had a talent when he served as auctioneer at charity events.

"People would donate all kinds of stuff and he would auction the items off. He was just terrific," she recalled.

While Lyon said that she and Martin sometimes disagreed with Mr. Ross's candidate endorsements for local political races, Lyon said he will be missed.

"It's a great loss to our community – and the city, too," she said.

Mr. Ross used his formidable fundraising skills to help numerous charitable groups over the years. He raised hundreds of thousands of dollars for charities, political campaigns, and other humane services. His public service has been recognized by the California state Assembly and state Senate, San Francisco's mayor and Board of Supervisors, and many

other civic and private organizations.

Mr. Ross also helped found the Tavern Guild, which organized gay bars to combat the influence of organized crime and police raids aimed at them. For more than 10 years he served as an officer and president of this organization. The Tavern Guild grew into a well-known fundraising group that benefited gay charities.

Mr. Ross cared deeply about the community and its well-being.

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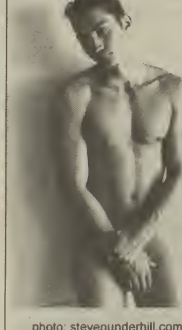


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The year in review: Sodomy, Santorum, and straight guys

by Bob Roehr

The U.S. Supreme Court added a fitting capstone to a month of gay Pride celebrations when, on June 26, it struck down sodomy laws that remained on the books in 13 states. The decision was *Lawrence v. Texas*.

In one sense the ruling had more of a symbolic impact than a legal one. Sodomy laws were seldom used to directly prosecute sexual acts but they often were used to stigmatize gays and lesbians as criminals and by extension to deny them equal treatment under the law in matters ranging from employment to child custody.

Perhaps the most satisfying portion of the decision was its blunt and complete rejection of the 1986 court decision that had allowed states to regulate sodomy. "Bowers was not correct when it was decided, and it is not correct today. It ought not to remain binding precedent. *Bowers v. Hardwick* should be and now is overruled," Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote for the majority.

No less satisfying was the broad language of the decision that embraced gay and lesbian Americans as equal citizens, fulfilling the promise of "Equal jus-

tice under law" that is carved into the gleaming white marble atop the court building.

"The petitioners are entitled to respect for their private lives," wrote Kennedy. "The State cannot demean their existence or control their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime. Their right to liberty under the Due Process Clause gives them the full right to engage in their conduct without intervention of the government."

"This is a historic, transformative decision ... it was a recognition of gay people's humanity," said Ruth Harlow, the attorney for Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund who guided the case through the legal system.

"This is constitutional rights in our real lives, in our homes, in our relationships," she said. It "changes the landscape. It sends a signal to not only courts but also to legislatures that we deserve equality and full respect."

The sodomy provision of Article 125 of the Universal Code of Military Justice is perhaps the last standing sodomy law in the U.S., and an underpinning of the antigay military policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

Lieutenant Colonel Loren Stephen Loomis used the



Lambda Legal's Ruth Harlow, left and Paul Smith, the attorney who argued the *Lawrence* case.

Lawrence decision to appeal his discharge from the military, in a case filed on July 7 in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington, D.C. That decision is expected in early 2004, though the case may be decided on non-constitutional grounds.

Politics

It was a very quiet year in Congress in terms of legislation directly affecting the GLBT community; rhetoric was another story.

The Republican leadership of both houses made sure that neither hate crimes legislation nor the Employment Non-Discrimination Act came up for a vote. In past years a hate crimes measure had been attached to an appropriations bill in the Senate, though it didn't survive a conference with the House.

But this year many of those bills have not yet been approved, despite the fact that the fiscal year started on October 1, and much of the government is operating on a continuing resolution. The silver lining is that social conservatives have been equally restricted in offering their antigay amendments.



Senator Rick Santorum

Senator Rick Santorum (R-Pennsylvania) generated a firestorm of controversy in April with his homophobic remarks. Anticipating the possibility of the Supreme Court striking down sodomy laws, he said, "You [then] have the right to bigamy, you have the right to polygamy, you have the right to incest, you have the right to adultery. You have the right to anything."

Longtime gay activist Frank Kameny said, "It's obvious that [Santorum] is a moral fascist, and

is becoming the voice of the 'American Taliban.' He is one of the evermore strident family fanatics. What he misses, among many other things, is that society exists for the individual; the individual does not exist for society."

"John F. Kennedy drew a distinction between his public role as president of a diverse country and his own private religious convictions, Santorum explicitly argues the opposite," wrote gay conservative Andrew Sullivan on his blog. "How can we have any hope of creating a democratic government in Iraq free from domination by repressive religion if we cannot free our own laws of official faith-based biases inflicted on our fellow citizens?"

So it was more than a bit ironic when the Reverend Steve Torrence stepped to the podium of the U.S. House of Representatives to deliver the opening prayer on May 1, the U.S. National Day of Prayer. He wore the crisply pressed uniform of the Key West Police Department, where he serves as a police officer and chaplain. He is a former pastor of the MCC church in Key West.

He was the first clergyman from the Metropolitan Community Church to have that honor, and he is believed to be the first openly gay person to deliver that prayer. "It is important to have diversity in Congress and it is important to understand that sexual orientation does not determine one's faith," said Representative Ileana Ros-Lentini, the south Florida Republican who invited

Torrence to offer the prayer.

The promotion of General Robert T. Clark, the man in charge of Fort Campbell, Kentucky when Private First Class Barry Winchell was murdered in an antigay assault in 1999, continued to twist slowly in the wind for much of the year. It was approved only in November, some 14 months after the nomination was first made.

C. Dixon Osburn, executive director of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which led the fight to deny Clark his promotion, was "disappointed" though not surprised by the confirmation. He took solace in the fact that, "For the first time in history, senators have closely scrutinized an officer's record on preventing antigay harassment."

The antigay policy known as "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" continued to take public hits, particularly over the discharge of trained Arabic linguists even as their services were needed in Iraq. And for the first time, in December, two retired generals and an admiral came out as gay. They are the highest-ranking officers ever to acknowledge their sexual orientation.

Society

Another great symbol of changing attitudes toward gays and lesbians was the election of V. Gene Robinson as Episcopal bishop of New Hampshire in June, his confirmation by that denomination's convention in August, and his consecration in November.

Archconservatives within the church, both domestically and especially internationally, were appalled about the development and continue to threaten schism. The controversy played out prominently across the media, and as time worn on, it seemed increasingly silly to most Americans.

Queer Eye for the Straight Guy became the surprise hit of the summer on television and made waves far beyond its limited cable distribution on Bravo, even morphing over into an edited version on NBC. Reichen and Chip showed that gays could be buff, cooperative hunks and win *The Amazing Race*. All of that was reinforced by news coverage, demonstrating that gays and lesbians are everywhere and increasingly are becoming part of the mainstream of American life. ▼

Editor's note: A look back at 2003 will continue next week.



The consecration of Episcopal Bishop Gene Robinson

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Susan Stryker leaves historical society

Nonprofit to search for new executive director

by Zak Szymanski

One of the community's oldest cultural institutions is undergoing some major changes as it struggles to maintain the operations basic to its mission statement and simultaneously tries to plan its future.

The GLBT Historical Society of Northern California has, for 18 years, preserved one of the world's largest collections of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender historical items. Under the leadership of Susan Stryker, Ph.D., the historical society raised \$2 million from 1999-2003 and in recent years sponsored numerous programs and exhibits – including the much talked about "Saint Harvey" exhibit, a tribute to the late Supervisor Harvey Milk, still on display at 657 Mission Street. The historical society has also technologically updated much of its collection and has begun planning the world's first full-scale GLBT museum.

Stryker, 42, resigned as executive director in November, officially leaving the post this month to finish a documentary film she began making in 1998. Like many nonprofits, the historical society has faced financial hardships and subsequent staff reorganization, and the nature of Stryker's duties had been redefined to the point that "it became more and more about turning the crank to raise the money, and I was frustrated I wasn't able to spend as much time on scholarship and research," she said.

"I realized there were many people who could be doing the job equally as well or better than I could, and I also reached a point where my film just had to get finished. It just seemed like a good time to make the move."

Stryker's upcoming documentary, *Screaming Queens*, is a full-length feature detailing a transgender uprising against police brutality in San Francisco's Tenderloin District in 1966. The pre-Stonewall riot had local significance, both for the larger gay community – there was no LGBTIQQ back then, just a broad "gay" community that had many overlaps as well as disagreements – and for transgenders, who saw the creation of trans-specific resources shortly after the action.

"It was the first time genderqueers really fought back," said Stryker. "It's the queens on the street who are right on the frontlines; they take all the heat, with their backs against the wall. They



Susan Stryker, right, with from left, Terry Henderling, Linda Albano, Dan Nicoletta, and Frank Robinson at the opening of the "St. Harvey" exhibit in June at the GLBT Historical Society.

have nothing to lose, so they fight."

Screaming Queens is co-written and produced by Victor Silverman, edited by Christine Steele, and shot by Sophie Constantinou. It is expected to be released in 2004.

When her film project is done, said Stryker, she plans to pursue academic work, and already has her eyes on potential jobs at nearby colleges and universities.

The next executive director at the GLBT Historical Society will have big shoes to fill. In addition to providing leadership and direction to the organization, Stryker is also a prominent researcher, artist, activist, writer, teacher, and speaker. Her credits include authoring the commercial bestsellers *Gay by the Bay* and *Queer Pulp*, released by San Francisco Chronicle Books in 1996 and 2001, respectively. She has served on the board of directors of Frameline, producers of the International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, and on the editorial review board of the *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*. Stryker also has held community positions with the Horizons Foundation Strategic Partners Program; the San Francisco Museum and Historical Society Advisory Committee; the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency's Mid-Market Project Area Committee; and the San Francisco Human Rights Commission's transgender nondiscrimination

task force.

Out of love for the organization, the GLBT Historical Society's treasurer Daniel Bao is filling the role of acting executive director on a volunteer basis. For the next six months, Bao, 37, will continue to try to raise money for the organization while helping the board of directors search for and

choose a permanent executive director.

"I'll be continuing the work of the historical society, which is a bit of a challenge considering our much reduced staff. I'll be relying on volunteers and going out and asking for financial help from the community," said Bao.

The historical society has laid

off six staff members since the summer, some of whom were salaried workers and others who were working due to project-specific grants. Only one paid staff member – the society's operations director – remains employed. Bao, a board member since 1994, noted that the board of directors will meet in January to determine the criteria for the next executive director.

"Choosing a new executive director is a little bit of art, and a little bit of science," he said. "I know one big quality they'll be looking for is fundraising ability."

In addition to his service at the historical society, Bao worked for the API Wellness Center for nine years and was a board member of the Gay Asian Pacific Alliance. He is not considering serving as the historical society's executive director on a permanent basis, he said.

As for Stryker, she will continue to be an active member of the historical society, volunteering and financially contributing whenever she is able. Immediate plans include finishing her film and most likely, spending April through June in Australia as a visiting scholar at a university in Sydney. ▼

To donate to the society, to become a member, or for more information, visit www.glbthistory.org.

Oakland

◀ page 2

rounding gender identity and transgender issues, there was much concern focused on bathroom usage.

Roosevelt Mosby, executive director of the Sexual Minority Alliance of Alameda County, told the council that it needed to work on education. As a gay man and leader of the queer youth organization, he said he supported the ordinance but that work needed to be done.

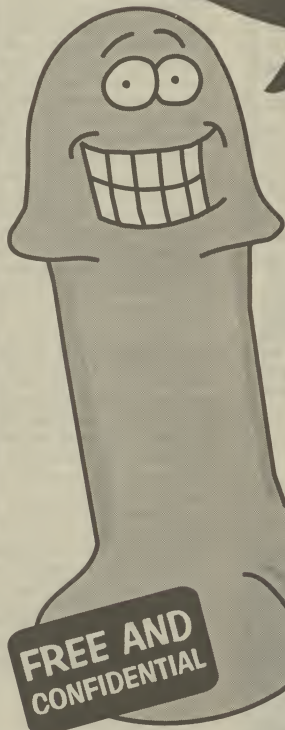
"Just don't put it out there," he said. "Consider a citywide task force so that transgenders are not getting hurt. What happens when there's transgenders in the bath-

room?"

Council member Desley Brooks said the city must "look aggressively at an education program," and noted that under the ordinance, the burden is placed on the person allegedly victimized when it comes to enforcement of the ordinance. That led to several council members calling for the re-establishment of the city's Human Relations Commission, which was disbanded several years ago. But Council member Jane Brunner reminded the council that the HRC "had serious trouble" with no paid staff and no way to investigate allegations of discrimination.

Overall, the council agreed the ordinance was a "good first step." ▼

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'Auntie Mame' makes a living

by Eric Ganther

Who: Jok Church

What: Comics feature writer for children

Where: San Rafael, California

A lot of queers aspire to make a living being creators. Is it genetics? Is it that we tend to live in cities? Or is it simply because our heroes are characters like Auntie Mame, who overcomes the mediocre and limiting attitudes of the middle class to lead an exuberant life of art and style. I hear the sighing out there, and the familiar litany: I'll never fund my retirement if I pursue my creative passions. I'll be laughed at if I'm not perfect. I'll just work at my drudge job for one more year. Think again! Here's a queer that has his cake and eats it too: Jok Church, gay man, children's author, and volunteer at Under One Roof.

Do you call yourself a cartoonist?

No, I'm a children's author whose work ends up in the Sunday comics section of the paper. My feature's name is *You Can with Beakman & Jax*. It's distributed by Universal Press Syndicate. I answer children's questions about the physical world: why is the window clear, or why is the grass green, or why is the sky blue, or why, if my eyes are brown, don't I see brown? You can read it in the *Oakland Tribune*, the *San Jose Mercury News*, the *Marin Independent Journal*, the *Santa Rosa Press Democrat*, and the *Sacramento Bee*.

How long have you been doing this? How did you get started?

About 13 years. I used to work for Lucasfilm Ltd. One of my jobs was writing responses to fan mail for George Lucas. My favorite let-

ter was: "Dear George, The sewer line is clogged up and my Mom says we're going to have to dig up the whole front yard. What can we do?" This is where I came up with the idea for Beakman & Jax. I was amazed at children who are not afraid to ask any question. They had not yet learned to not ask questions. And that was a powerful thing.

When *Star Wars* lost popularity in the late 1980s, I was laid off. I ended up with a drudge job. But I still needed to make art, so I devised a comic strip based on the

insight about the kids' bravery in asking questions. I didn't do it for money, I did it to have a way to make a contribution and use my creativity. I gave it to my local newspaper, the *Marin Independent Journal*, for free and they printed it. I wanted to sell it to other

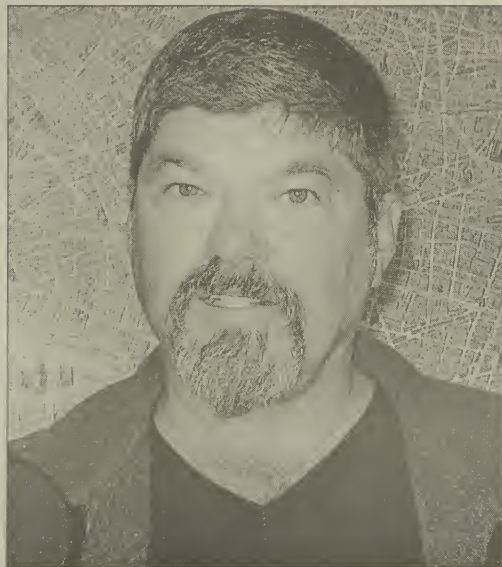
papers. But the papers were \$1 a piece. So I dumpster-dived outside the printing press and retrieved the overprints. I cut out copies of my strip, taped them to pieces of paper and sent them to newspaper editors week after week. I gave myself a year to be in 10 newspapers and by the end of that year I was in 100. Now I'm in 300 papers every week with roughly 52 million readers.

So you make a nice living in the funnies?

Yes. I make a reasonable living. I'm not wealthy. I don't make enough money to own real estate in San Francisco, but I feel successful. I'm an artist who makes a living doing his art. I know that is special and rare. I also get to make a difference in children's lives.

How does the feature work?

Kids send letters to my publisher with questions like, "Why does the freezer make that stuff



Jok Church writes a comics feature for children that is syndicated in 300 newspapers across the country.

that looks like snow?" My publisher opens the letters, sends a response card back, and forwards the pile onto me.

The response card explains that I get 700 letters a week and can only publish one. I remind them that they have the power to get the answer themselves by going to the library. The person who works there – the librarian – wants to be asked a question. It makes them high.

Back at my pile, I flip through the questions until one of them speaks to me: "What do animals do when they sense fear?" or "Why does spraying water on your hair stop static electricity?" Sometimes there are questions that I want to know the answer to, too. Other times the questions are pure poetry and I can't not print them: "When snow melts, what happens to the white?"

However it happens, I choose one question, research the answer and come up with the clearest possible way of explaining it. I don't answer the question with an answer, I answer the question with a thing to do, an activity, an "experiment." For example, you can actually make a cloud in a plastic pop bottle to understand what clouds and fog are. I tell them the things they need for the experiment; the steps to take; and then the explanation of what just happened. I end it with a section tying the experiment back to the original question.

Recently I was asked to describe Einstein's theory of relativity, and I did it! It's mostly about measuring stuff and stuff being in relation to other stuff, etc. But I'd never heard anybody say it the way I did. I felt good that I was able to come up with a new way of describing it – in the funnies!

Do you have a lot of teachers using your work?

Yes, every column is ringed by a dashed line with a pair of scissors graphic so teachers can clip the column out and laminate it. I also have eight books of collected columns, six of which are best-sellers. There are probably 1 million of these books out there.

You've been involved with TV, what's that like?

There was a television series on CBS called *Beakman's World* based

on my comic strip. There's a huge difference between writing for newspapers and writing for television. When I write for newspapers, I'm the artist and I write the column. I have editors that correct my spelling and grammar. Television is collaborative. And the accounting in show business is horrifying. We had four years on the air. Of the \$16 million spent, my profit over 10 years was \$25,000. I could have made more in tips as a waiter!

One of the difficult things about working on the set was being an openly gay man. I announced that Adam was my lover and that my history of public gay activism might be cause for attack. In meetings in Hollywood, it's pretty much people comparing dick sizes. I found out that when you come out, you lose size. And I believe this is still the case for those just starting out in Hollywood.

What do you like about being a newspaper columnist/comic strip writer?

I get to make a difference in how people, especially kids, see the world. My column gives kids a chance to learn by doing. I want children to do these experiments with their friends, family, and classmates. In this way, not only do they learn about the thing, they get to make something together. They get to make understanding together. And I love facilitating this process.

I get to work for myself. I get to take ideas or whims and turn them into reality. All artists do this. It's satisfying doing what I want to do and make a living doing it.

What's difficult about it?

The solitude. I work out of my bedroom in San Rafael, so I have to structure weekly activities or I become a bedroom-Internet vegetable. Every Wednesday I volunteer at Under One Roof. I've done this for eight years, and as a result I have relationships with people up and down Castro Street. I love being in the neighborhood. It's such a colorful and magical place to be.

What would you recommend to someone interested in writing newspaper features that lead to television experience?

The same thing I recommend

to all artists. First, be patient because it's going to take some time to be able to survive solely off your art. Next, swim in the huge difference between yes and no. No pops up a lot and it can shut you down. When you ask other people to be involved in your art, you get closer to no than if you do it yourself. Don't give them the power of no by asking them for money, just do it. This means you will be waiting tables or cleaning floors or running some weird business for at least a while. Yes, follow your bliss sounds like bullshit, but it's absolutely the truth. You have to follow your art.

Are you single or partnered?

One of the benefits of being gay is that we get to invent a lot of our lives, including the kind of relationships we have. I have a lover of 31 years, Adam Kazimir Ciesielski. We met at a gay community center that I lived at. I also have a boyfriend, his name is David Nicholas, he's a bootblack in Palm Springs.

Does being gay play into how you make your newspaper feature?

It does. It's part of the ability set that I use to do my job, but I don't talk about it in my column. I don't talk about sex, intimacy, or the bedroom. It has no place in my column. Children don't ask about it.

Queers have to invent themselves. We take a unique and distinctly different path in our self-discovery than the majority culture. We're very much aliens in the world. We have to look at the pieces and say "How can I find a place for myself here?" The un-gay are culturally supported for most of their lives in ways that we are not. And I think that being an alien allows you a different perspective. Most great artists step back and take a look at how things really work and then figure out what is optimal. That's a skill set more queers have because of this experience.

Do queers have a special relationship with children?

Our job is different. We hold up a mirror. And for me, the embodiment of this unique perspective is Mame Dennis Burnside, Auntie Mame, and she lived at #3 Beekman Place. My cartoon character is named Beakman Place, in tribute to the role of "here's another way of looking at it." And I think queers are pretty much in charge of "here's another way of looking at it." It's easier for us to go to that childlike place.

Artists also take the self-discovery path, too. And you don't have to be queer to be an artist. But we're all aliens. It's this process of having to invent yourself that gives you power, perspective and insight.

In your opinion, how do queer guys work differently than straight guys?

There are less assumptions about what's going on. When you're working at a job with straight people, you invariably encounter "What did you think of the game?" And I reply, "I'm a homosexual, and sports are optional for my people, and I checked no on my card, so I don't know what you're talking about." This way you can diffuse the cultural difference with self-assured humor.

Thanks for your time, Jok. Continued good luck with your comics feature. ▼

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OBITUARIES

A. J. Esta
1930 — 2003

Long-time San Francisco resident, theatre critic, and director A. J. Esta died of liver cancer on Sunday, November 30, while visiting family and friends in Wheeler, Oregon. He was 73.

Born in Butte, Montana, Esta moved to the East Coast after earning his masters degree from the University of Montana, then to San Francisco in the '50s to pursue a theatrical career with Jules Irving and Herbert Blau's Actors Workshop. From the mid-'60s he worked with a number of local companies, was manager of the Inter-players, and also taught and directed at Lone Mountain College. An inveterate theatre-goer, he reviewed local productions for two trade papers, *Drama-Logue* and more recently *Back Stage*. Among Esta's innovative local works were the first all-male productions of *Hello Dolly* and *The Women*, and the original musi-

cals *Saddle the Unicorn*, *COLEcuts*, *NASHional Anthem*, and *Shakespeare, the Musical*. A former member of the Critics Circle, he was witty and passionate about all things theatrical, and was widely respected for his support of local actors and productions.

He is survived by a sister and brother, both of Salt Lake City. A memorial celebration is being planned for late January.

Rodney Jordan-ross



Rodney Jordan-ross made his transition on Saturday, December 6th following treatment for Lymphoma.

Born on Shaw AFB in North Carolina, he was raised in the military in England and Sacramento, California. Rodney came to San Francisco in 1972 where he established a 20-year career with Southern Pacific Railroad working in data communications. Since 1997 he has traveled North

America as a full-time classic RV'er with his partner and beloved cat "Bobbie Ross".

"Rodney" had two long term relationships during his lifetime; the first as the dutiful "wife" of a Tunisian Jew and the second as the proud slave, boy, friend, lover domestic partner and husband to Phil Ross who survives him. His relationship was celebrated and shared in workshops all across America including the National Convention of Black and White Men Together.

Rod performed in a Middle Eastern Dance Company in San Francisco for 17 years as a male belly dancer. After his retirement in 1996, he became an Intuitive Crystal and Healing Touch practitioner and minister. He also served the HIV/AIDS community across Northern California as Co-Chair of the Mendocino Community Health Center Community Advisory Board; and as a member of the Mountain Counties AIDS Consortium in N.E. California. He received honors for his service at the HIV Drop-In Center in Clearlake, California.

To quote a life-long friend: "He was a great person; you couldn't ask for a better friend. He gave and never asked

for anything in return. I've never heard him say a bad thing about a person on this planet — and I never heard rod complain either." He was 51.

A memorial project in the form of an on-going and interactive website is underway to celebrate his life. All are encouraged to contribute stories, anecdotes, quotes and memorabilia. Please communicate to: rod@leatherweb.com. Donations in lieu of flowers may be sent to "Touch Of Light Ministry," 5545 Old Highway 53 - RV-40; Clearlake, CA 95422. A private memorial service is planned. Contact Ross@leatherweb.com.

"A true leatherman who stole my heart in which his leathers will forever be held in the highest honor in the House of Ross."

Robert "Tiny" Reforma



Our community mourns the loss of its universally loved and loving Tiny, long-time activist, musician, author, bartender, mentor and friend to all, who died suddenly and unexpectedly at home in San Jose on Sunday, December 7, 2003, his 63rd birthday.

Truly a blithe spirit and gentle soul who never let negativity cloud his life or ever-present smile. Tiny often could be found, chalice in hand, frequently in leather, cavorting with patrons and friends in Polk Street, SoMa, and South Bay clubs.

Spanning four decades as a bartender, the last dozen years at Renegades in San Jose, he also worked in banking, property management, and in his hometown of Modesto as a farm owner and labor contractor.

But Tiny's passions were his friends and community, his life-long career in music and entertainment with his beautiful tenor voice and instrumentals, heard in countless area venues; and his Tenderloin "kids," who will remember his passing out fistfuls of lotto tickets

when he was partying, money when needed, and the bags which he lovingly stuffed with his homemade sandwiches and goodies during Thanksgivings and Christmases.

Tiny was also the proud co-owner with best friend and driver, Nick Ringo III, of Ringo-Reforma Racing, the first gay NASCAR team in the nation. Nick, the loving son-he-never-had, is crushed, as are Tiny's friends and family, at his passing.

Tiny is also survived by loving sister, Shirl Kiar, and niece, Debbie Farrell, of Santa Rosa, and brother, Fred Reforma, of San Jose.

A Memorial Service will take place on December 20th at 11 a.m. at Odd Fellows upstairs chapel, 122 Race St., San Jose, California. A reception will follow at Renegades Bar at 393 Stockton Ave. in San Jose.

Donations to AEF, San Jose's Billy de Frank Center, or an AIDS youth group preferred.

Tiny, thank you for your love and laughter, which will continue to fill our hearts all of our days.

OBITUARY POLICY

Obituaries must be typed and no longer than 200 words. Please follow normal rules of capitalization — and no poetry. We reserve the right to edit for style, clarity, grammar, and taste.

If you're submitting a photo of the deceased, write their name on the back. If you include a SASE for the photo's return, write the person's name on the inside of the envelope flap. All obituaries must include a contact name and phone number. They must be submitted within a year of the death.

Deadline for obituaries is Monday at 5 p.m., with the exception of special display ad obituaries, which must be submitted by Friday at 3 p.m.

Bush may back FMA

by Bob Roehr

President Bush may support a constitutional amendment to prevent same-sex marriage. But he stopped short of endorsing the Federal Marriage Amendment, already introduced in both houses of Congress, in a December 16 interview with Diane Sawyer on the ABC program *Prime Time*.

"If necessary, I will support a constitutional amendment which would honor marriage between a man and a woman," Bush said near the end of the interview.

In other language sure to please his social conservative supporters, the president said he believes that the Massachusetts court "overreached its bounds as a court. It did the job of the legislature. It was a very activist court in making the decision it made."

He left open the possibility of supporting the state option of civil unions for gays, a position that Vice President Dick Cheney supported during the 2000 campaign. And he expressed a states' rights position in terms of leaving decisions on marriage to the states, "Except and unless judicial rulings undermine the sanctity of marriage. In which case, we may need a constitutional amendment."

When asked if the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act was sufficient to protect marriage, as its primary author former Representative Bob Barr (R-Georgia) has argued, Bush said, "It may be undetermined at this point."

He dodged the question of whether gays are sinners by saying, "We're all sinners ... and having said that, however, I do believe in the sanctity of marriage ... but I don't see that as conflict with

being a tolerant person or an understanding person."

Bush's responses in the interview were essentially the same ones he has consistently given throughout the year when asked about gay marriage. He has stated his belief that marriage is between a man and a woman and that his administration is studying options to preserve that interpretation of marriage.

The incremental change he expressed in Tuesday's interview was in a greater uncertainty about DOMA, and in using the specific words "constitutional amendment" rather than the broader concept of examining all options.

The president, however, stopped short of endorsing either the FMA that is before Congress, or even more restrictive language that would ban civil unions, which some social conservative extremists are considering proposing.

Bush's comments seemed to please no one.

"It's never necessary — in fact it should be shameful — to insert prejudice and discrimination into the U.S. Constitution," said Winnie Stachelberg, political director of the Human Rights Campaign. "To use this country's most cherished document to strip away individual liberty and freedom would be nothing short of a disgrace — with which the vast majority of the American people disagree."

Log Cabin Republicans "has consistently and clearly opposed any effort to write discrimination into the United States Constitution," said Executive Director Patrick Guerriero. He urged the president "to avoid a divisive culture war that will only divide the American family."

"President Bush continues to flirt with this antifamily amend-

ment long after every Democratic candidate for president has condemned it," said Dave Noble, executive director of National Stonewall Democrats. "This amendment isn't about protecting marriage, it is about prejudice."

Presidential candidate Representative Richard Gephardt (D-Missouri) called on Bush "to end his alliance with bigotry once and for all and speak out against the Republican Party's hostile election-year attempt to polarize the election." He strongly opposes the FMA "as purely political and unnecessarily divisive at the expense of those who already suffer from discrimination." However, he stopped short of calling for marriage equality for gays.

"We consider this a declaration of war on gay America," said Matt Foreman, executive director for the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "We cannot and will not be silent in the face of this attempt to enshrine our community with second-class citizenship in this nation's most sacred document."

The far right wasn't exactly jumping up and down with glee either. Tony Perkins, executive director of the Family Research Council, said, "It sounds as though the administration would support civil unions, which are counterfeits of the institution of marriage."

Andrew Sullivan, the gay conservative supporter of same-sex marriage, offered this analysis on his blog, calling Bush's comments, "A carefully tailored piece of obfuscation. It seems to me that, from this statement, we neither have an unconditional endorsement of the FMA nor an uncategorical defense of states' rights with regard to marriage. Bush wants to have it both ways." ▼

Gay ads

◀ page 3

So *Graham Norton* show and *Absolutely Fabulous*.

"The genesis of this ad idea came when I read the storyboards — it was immediately apparent I could put a gay twist on it and make a gay ad," Marsh, who noted the company's gay section receives 100,000 visits monthly, told Wilke.

While more gay positive commercials are popping up on television, Wilke said "you don't see them on television often because they are not on the air long."

And many ads seen in America play to gay stereotypes, depict straight men's fantasies about lesbians, or use

fear of transgenders for laughs.

"GLBT stereotypes and homophobia still run in ads," said Wilke. "Bisexuals don't show up very often in our culture or our media. But when they do, they are usually cheating on someone."

And the ads almost never show the diversity of the LGBT community.

"For now gay people in commercials are almost always shown as a young white guy or a man dressed as a woman," said Wilke. "The advertising industry likes to think it reflects society, but it does not. There are no overweight folks, there are no GLBT people of color out there."

But things are slowly changing. Soon the city of Philadelphia will begin airing a television ad specifical-

ly marketing the town to gay tourists.

"No previous city has done that before," said Wilke. "Interestingly, San Francisco has never advertised to the gay community. Maybe they think they have got too many gay people already."

As for the future, Wilke predicts gays and lesbians will become a larger part of the montages and vignettes in commercials, and less often the punch line.

"We will see less of an exploitation approach and probably more lesbian imagery. But most likely from a straight male fantasy perspective," he said. ▼

To view LGBT advertising visit www.commercialcloset.org.

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Ho, ho healthy

by Jim Provenzano

Got a New Year's resolution? Want the kind of gift that keeps on giving, and moves through space, instead of being wrapped up in a box? Have you already started indulging in a bit too much holiday feasting?

There are plenty of offerings in the sports and fitness community to give yourself – or a friend or partner – who may need that little nudge toward getting more physical.

Yogay

If your recipient really needs to start from scratch for the new year, nothing beats yoga for a full-body stretching and toning. It's a great complement to a gym workout, or in place of one, if you just want to feel good while aligning yourself and breaking a good sweat.

You can sign your giftee up for Yoga 101, a four-week series of yoga fundamentals for absolute beginners, taught by Benjamin Patterson.

"This is mainly for people who want to start yoga, but haven't because they feel not flexible or 'in shape' enough, or can't find a good beginners class," said Patterson. "It's also fine for people who have some yoga experience, but would like grounding in the fundamentals."

Patterson's classes are Thursdays from 6-7:30 p.m., beginning January 8, and repeating the first Thursday of each month after. Classes are at The Hive (upstairs) at Urban Forage, 254 Fillmore Street at Haight Street. Cost is \$13/class (drop-in); \$40/series (preregistered). Space is very limited. Pre-registration is highly recommended. Call (415) 621-6768.

A similar style is the popular Bikram Yoga in the Mission District (2390 Mission at 20th Street). With warm, heated rooms, it'll be a welcome workout in mid-winter. Bikram has a special, 10 days for only \$10, or 10 lessons for only \$110, a perfect bargain for the novice, or someone looking for a tune-up.

The facility has an ample studio, showers for men and women, and you can rent a mat if you don't have one. Registration for more classes range in prices, and you can set your own schedule.

You can purchase a gift certificate for an introductory special

class package, or any dollar amount for current students or new friends until the end of the year. Gift certificates are available at: www.missionyoga.com or at the front desk. (415) 401-9642.

Ribbons and rasslin'

Here's an idea. You get your partner a sexy new singlet, wrapped up in a box. But wait! He or she thought it mere kink wear, but inside the folds of fabric is a gift membership with Golden Gate Wrestling Club.

Only \$60, plus \$25 for a USA Wrestling membership, which includes a subscription to *USA Wrestler*, a color magazine that regularly features those cute grapplers y'all go so crazy for.

You can buy these items online (along with a copy of *PINS*, my first novel, for only \$10. Proceeds benefit GGWC. Come on, you knew I was gonna toss in a bit of product placement, dincha? Visit www.ggwc.org to buy these items, as well as T-shirts, pins, patches, and other stuff.

Gi-ft wrapped

Want to get a bit more physical? How about a few lessons in taekwon do?

Master Ken Craig, chief instructor of Triangle Taekwon Do supervises classes for beginners and others of all levels in the highly energetic yet mentally calming Korean art of self-defense. New classes are at the LGBT Community Center, 1800 Market Street.

E-mail info@triangletkd.org, visit www.triangletkd.org, or call (415) 495-1888 for schedules and fees.

Ski fever

It being winter, and so darn cold even here, one might as well enjoy it with some snow. SAGA North is simply the GLBT ski group to join.

The San Francisco Bay Area gay and lesbian ski and snowboard club hosts frequent weekend trips to Lake Tahoe ski areas, Aspen Gay Ski Week, and other exciting events. SAGA North also conducts several outdoor activities during the summer, including hiking, water skiing, and river rafting. Call (415) 995-2772 or visit www.saganorth.com

Tank you

If you're feeling lavish, and want to really impress your loved one, why not take him or her off on an undersea adventure to an exotic locale with Rainbow Divers? Their farthest destinations to Roatan, Alaska, the Sea of Cortez, and the Galapagos Islands are months away. How about vis-

iting the Dominican Republic to see humpback whales in March? These trips range from \$1,700 to \$2,500.

You can make a down payment now, or just sign up for a beginners trek to Monterey, Point Lobos, and other nearby

spots for less than \$100. Visit www.rainbowdivers.org for info.

Xmas tree hugger

So, your environmentalist pals don't buy trees to decorate with ornaments. That's fine. You can enjoy the great outdoors with a pine-scented gift by way of a membership with the Sierra Club. The gay and lesbian branch (get it?) hosts

hikes all around our scenic Bay Area. Get close to nature and enjoy the company of like-minded folks.

GLS outings run the gamut from easy urban strolls to vigor-

ous peak hikes to relaxed car camping to demanding wilderness backpacks and naturalist-led walks to hands-on restoration and trail maintenance projects. Annual membership is only \$17. Call

HAART

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cent is a pretty sizable number," said study co-author and YMHs lead investigator, Dennis Osmond, Ph.D., UCSF professor in the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

"Unfortunately, the doubling of the rate of unprotected receptive anal intercourse by study participants offset the beneficial effects of antiretroviral treatments becoming widely available," said Osmond. "While our findings confirm that treatment of HIV-infected individuals can have quite a significant impact on the spread of AIDS, they also show that treatment needs to be accompanied by prevention interventions to reduce risky behavior in order to see the benefit in reduced rates of new HIV infections in the community."

Broad impact

The study not only impacts the debate surrounding funding for AIDS care but also has implications for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's HIV initiatives. In 2004, the CDC will begin to place more focus on testing people who are HIV-positive as well as their partners.

While AIDS groups across the country agree such a strategy is needed, they have also sounded alarms that once those people are identified to be positive there are not adequate resources to properly care for them. According to the National Alliance of State and Territorial AIDS Directors, as of November 1 there were already 679

people across the country unable to access ADAP services.

"That is certainly an argument we have been making in California. At the same time the CDC is encouraging more testing, they also ought to be encouraging the president and Congress to provide adequate funding for ADAP," argued Van Gorder. "There are a lot of people who will decide not to test if they believe there is no hope to accessing treatment, let alone access to treatment that will help stop the spread of HIV to others."

Osmond agrees the study is a powerful argument for ADAP.

"Not only is the CDC pushing to identify more positives but we have new evidence that treating positives is also a prevention tool," said Osmond. "There has always been this tension between prevention and treatment in the HIV world. This kind of shows that they can go together, that treatment has prevention implications as well."

As for treatment, the study could also be seen as a reason for people who are HIV positive to begin taking HAART.

"I would imagine it would help to motivate some people who are sort of on the fence about whether or not to treat their HIV infection to know that there is a chance, a good chance, that being treated will help reduce the possibility of transmission," said Van Gorder. "I think most HIV-positive people take their role in transmission seriously. But this will help people to take their role more seriously."

The researchers cautioned the study results should not be seen as reason for those men already on HAART to abandon safe sex prac-

(415) 977-5500 or visit <http://sanfranciscobay.sierraclub.org/GLS/>

Hands on

Of course, you might also hire one of the many workout trainers who advertise in this publication. There are also lots of massage therapists who can make you or your giftee feel relaxed and ready for more intimate encounters after a good workout. What better way to say "Happy Holidays" than the gift of a healthy New Year?

So, if you'd rather hear, "Honey, we've joined a bowl-ling league!" instead of, "Oh, another sweater. How ... nice," go to www.sportscomplex.org, click on "Local GL Sports Groups," and get the gift that'll keep on giving through the New Year. ▼

tics. They note there have been cases where a person's viral load was undetectable and they still passed on HIV to their sexual partners.

Taking HAART "doesn't render people not infectious. We know that," said Osmond. "It shouldn't be regarded as a free pass in any way. We already saw one of the downsides in success of treatment is an increase in risk behavior. It offset a lot of the gains in reduced infectiousness."

The study was funded by grants from the National Institute on Drug Abuse, the National Cancer Institute, the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (all parts of the National Institutes of Health), the University-wide AIDS Research Program of the State of California, the AIDS Clinical Research Center of the University of California, and the UCSF/Gladstone Institute for Virology and Immunology Center for AIDS Research.

Other co-authors of the study are Dr. Jeffrey N. Martin, MPH, assistant professor in the UCSF Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Kimberly Page Shafer, Ph.D., MPH, assistant professor of medicine at the UCSF Center for AIDS Prevention Studies; Amber Cheng, MPH, statistician in the UCSF Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics; Edwin Charlebois, Ph.D., MPH, assistant professor of medicine at the AIDS Policy Research Center at the UCSF AIDS Research Institute; and Dr. Robert M. Grant, MPH, assistant investigator at the Gladstone Institute for Virology and Immunology and UCSF assistant professor of medicine. ▼

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CLASSIFIEDS

Rapid HIV test

◀ page 4

don't come back for their results they may be out there spreading the disease. Clients have been looking at this and saying 'I can start to change my life now.'"

Already available at Glide, the AIDS Health Project, Haight Ashbury Free Medical Clinic and Larkin Street Youth Services, rapid testing will be phased in to another six locations beginning January. Magnet, the gay men's health services center in the Castro, will be part of that group and anticipates having the rapid testing available to clients by March.

"I think the benefit of it is for a lot of gay men, who have a long history of being tested for HIV, is to be able to come in and know the same day as you come in for testing what your HIV status is," said Magnet Director Steve Gibson.

Morris said despite keeping the rapid test pilot program rather quiet, many gay men showed up during the four months seeking out the rapid test. With health officials recommending gay men who are sexually active get tested every six months, the rapid tests are an easy way for gay men to heed that advice.

"A lot of gay men I talked with said this is great," said Morris. "They said they would get tested more frequently now since they don't have to wait two weeks."

Those in the AIDS community watching to see if rapid testing is embraced by gay men said they have been surprised so far with the positive results.

"Everyone I have talked to running the programs is very pleased with the responses and surprised people are willing to come in and do all that in one visit," said Dana Van Gorder, director of state and local affairs at the San Francisco AIDS Foundation. "It does seem preparing yourself to go in and be tested and counseled and receive test results in so short of time feels very loaded psychologically."

Barbara Adler, director of HIV counseling and testing at the AIDS Health Project, said during the agency's pilot between October and December, more heterosexuals were calling and asking for the test. Since news spread this month that AHP was offering the rapid tests, now more gay men are seeking appointments.

"Folks we have been seeing are low risk. The majority of clients are very, very anxious for many different reasons and it seems are searching and looking for results as soon as possible," she said. "A lot of people haven't been regular HIV testers."

The obvious benefit to rapid

testing is it eliminates the problem of clients not returning to receive their test results. Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimate 20 to 30 percent of people who use standard HIV testing do not come back for their results. In San Francisco, 15 percent of testers do not return.

"The ease of not having to come back a second time is really valuable," said Dowling.

"Definitely, clients said to us 'I would not have tested if I had to wait for my results,'" added Adler.

Health officials expect the rapid testing will boost efforts to get people who are HIV-positive into treatment and counseling programs.

That is "one of the key benefits of rapid testing," said Faith Gaither-Davis, Glide's HIV health services manager. "You have the person right there when you give them the results."

Glide Health Services was the state's first rapid testing pilot site and studied the use of the new test between May and August of this year. Pleased with the results, the Tenderloin-based clinic continued with the program and was soon joined by the other three agencies.

It has taken so long to get rapid testing into the field because sites first have to be approved by the federal government before administering the tests and many counselors must undergo additional training to prepare them for what is an emotionally charged experience.

"The state and city are very deliberately rolling out the test to get all the kinks out," said Morris. "Glide spent a year doing logistical work before we did the first test. We wanted the client's experience to be absolutely perfect."

Dowling added, "In the past the test for HIV has always been done in a lab. Rapid testing is done on site. There are a lot of rules and regulations people have to learn."

The one similarity between the rapid tests and standard tests is the counseling client's receive.

"Rapid testing does not mean rapid counseling," said Morris.

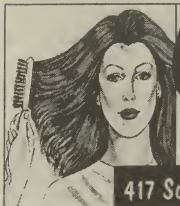
However, the sessions are harder on counselors.

"Rapid testing sessions are much more intense because of the feelings involved. Both the counselor and client know they are getting the results that day," said Morris. "The hell a person goes through in two weeks is condensed into 25 minutes. It creates a rapport between the counselor and the client."

Currently, all rapid testing is mostly done by appointment only. To find out more information on where and when to get rapid testing, call (415) 502-TEST. ▼

with our fellow citizens is that diversity is not to be feared, but embraced. It is time to sit down and break that bread together so that in 2004, we have the allies in place, ready to go to war with us on the issue of full marriage equality. ▼

McKay is the executive director of Marriage Equality California. Kotulski is the author of *Why You Should Give A Damn About Gay Marriage*, available soon from Allyson Publications.



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BAY AREA REPORTER CLASSIFIEDS

LEGAL NOTICES

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

The San Francisco Redevelopment Agency will accept bids on Contract No. RPSB 004-03, South Beach Park & Harbor Improvement Project (Building and Site Improvements) January 14, 2004.

NOTE: THIS SOLICITATION IS A RE-BID. A California IBI Contractors license is required to bid this contract. Work includes a construction of a 2 story 11,300 square foot harbor master building, wood and steel framed supported by pile and grade beam foundations; new utilities, landscaping and site work. Location is adjacent to Pier 40. Estimated cost is \$6,100,000. Bidders in possession of the original contract documents are not required to purchase additional sets. Bidders may obtain documents upon payment of a \$125 check to San Francisco Redevelopment Agency. Contact Ted Maniatis at (415) 749-2413 for further information.

† SAN FRANCISCO DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER ASSURANCE

Consumer Tip! With the high cost of fuel these days make sure you get what you pay for! Always make sure you are paying the advertised price per gallon for fuel. Contact the San Francisco Department of Consumer Assurance if you have a complaint relating to weight, count or measure. The round counter seal on the gas pump ensures the pump was tested and the Department of Consumer Assurance phone number is on the seal for your protection. Be a smart consumer!

† Consumer Tip! Be aware of parking meters in San Francisco that do not give the correct amount of time for your money. If you receive a parking meter ticket in San Francisco and you believe the parking meter is inaccurate, contact the Department of Consumer Assurance and one of our inspectors will test the meter for accuracy. If the meter is found to be inaccurate, the Department can help you challenge the ticket. Provide the meter number and location of the meter when calling or using the online complaint form.

† The Dept. of Consumer Assurance protects San Francisco's citizens by researching consumer complaints regarding the sale of goods and services sold by weight, count or measure. Consumer protection includes testing scales, price scanners and packaged commodities in retail stores, testing taxicab meters for accuracy, testing gasoline pumps and many other devices. Inspectors regulate quality standards for produce, plants and flowers and complete pest inspections to protect California's billion dollar agriculture crops from diseases. The Department protects consumers and businesses from dishonest practices that include fraud, deceptive practices or negligence. The Department also handles insect identification, bee inquiries and provides information about the Germany Farmers' Market and Germany Antique & Collectibles Market.

† Contact the Department to report possible fraud relating to weight, count or measure, deceptive packaging or advertising, retail store scanner pricing errors, inaccurate meters, short weight on products, substandard produce or illegal tobacco advertising. A consumer complaint form is available on our website at www.sfgov.org/casf or contact us directly with complaints. Help us promote equity in the marketplace in San Francisco!

† For more information: San Francisco Department of Consumer Assurance, 501 Cesar Chavez, Suite 109A, San Francisco, CA 94124 (415) 824-6100; fax (415) 285-8776; TTY: 415-285-1214 Toll Free: (888) 966-SURE (7873) www.sfgov.org/casf

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO FILE NO. CMC 03-541087

In the Matter of the Application of Brian Lee Mavrogeorge for Change of Name. The application of Brian Lee Mavrogeorge for change of name, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Brian Lee Mavrogeorge has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Brian Lee Bonner. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 10th day of February, 2004 at 9:00am., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 1, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO FILE NO. CMC 03-541083

In the Matter of the Application of Emilio Stefano Prieto for Change of Name. The application of Emilio Stefano Prieto for change of name, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Emilio Stefano Prieto has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Emilio Stefano Prieto Torres. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 27th day of January, 2004 at 9:00am., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 1, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO FILE NO. CMC 03-541070

In the Matter of the Application of Shora Miller for Change of Name. The application of Shora Miller for change of name, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Shora Miller has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Shornora Miller. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 27th day of January, 2004 at 9:00am., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 1, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO FILE NO. CMC 03-541081

In the Matter of the Application of Douglas Taylor Rothstein for Change of Name. The application of Douglas Taylor Rothstein for change of name, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Douglas Taylor Rothstein has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Douglas Taylor Kastle. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 29th day of January, 2004 at 9:00am., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 1, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO FILE NO. CMC 03-541025

In the Matter of the Application of Shannon Minter for Change of Name and change of Gender. The application of Shannon Minter for change of name and change of gender, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Shannon Minter has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Shannon Price. Minter and his/her gender be changed from female to male. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 13th day of January, 2004 at 9:00am., of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 1, 2003

STATEMENT FILE A-0271814-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: J. Wavro Associates 1847 Lombard Street, San Francisco, CA 94123. This business is conducted by an individual signed James Wavro. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 12/01/03. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, CA on 12/02/03.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 1, 2003

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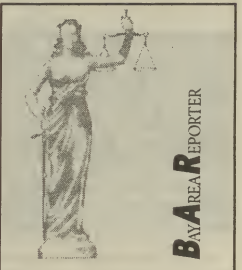
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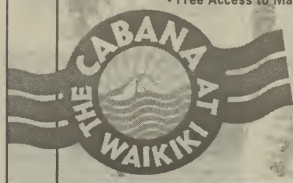


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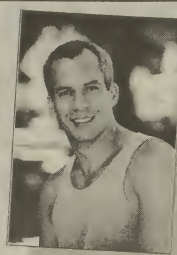
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LEGAL NOTICES

STATEMENT FILE A-0271360-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Sunset Psychic 1417 9th Avenue San Francisco, CA 94122. This business is conducted by an individual signed Rose Johnson. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 8/08/93. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 11/12/03.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 1, 2003

STATEMENT FILE 0271802-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Debra Damo Hotel 106 Fern Court, San Francisco, Ca. 94109. This business is conducted by a corporation, signed Tsegai Berhe. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 12/02/03. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 12/02/2003.

DEC. 25, JAN. 01, 08, 15, 2003

STATEMENT OF ABANDONMENT
OF USE OF FICTITIOUS BUSINESS
NAME FILE 243248

The following person(s) have abandoned the use of the fictitious business name known as Debra Damo Hotel 106 Fern Court, San Francisco, Ca. 94109. This business was conducted by an individual, signed Tsegai Berhe. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 12/02/03.

DEC. 25, JAN. 01, 08, 15, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

FILE NO. CNC 03-541009
In the Matter of the Application of David Allan Wentworth for Change of Name. The application of David Allan Wentworth for change of name, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that David Allan Wentworth has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to David Wentworth Schu. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 17th day of February at 9:00am of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 25, JAN. 01, 08, 15, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
FILE NO. CNC 03-540939
In the Matter of the Application of Xavier Lartigue for Change of Name. The application of Xavier Lartigue for change of name, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Xavier Lartigue has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Latif Kam Ra Eze. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 17th day of February at 9:00am of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 25, JAN. 01, 08, 15, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

FILE NO. CNC 03-541068
In the Matter of the Application of Frederick William Hook for Change of Name. The application of Frederick William Hook for change of name, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Frederick William Hook has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Andrea Ashley Chenie. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 27th day of January at 9:00am of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 25, JAN. 01, 08, 15, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

FILE NO. CNC 03-540960
In the Matter of the Application of Sonya Sherrard for Change of Name. The application of Sonya Sherrard for change of name, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Sonya Sherrard has filed an application proposing that his/her name be changed to Duchu Malika Jali. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Department 218 on the 17th day of February at 9:00am of said day to show cause why the application for change of name should not be granted.

DEC. 25, JAN. 01, 08, 15, 2003

STATEMENT FILE A-0271760-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Westwood, 236 West Portal #334 San Francisco, Ca. 94127. This business is conducted by an individual, signed Mark Baisleri. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on NA. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 12/01/2003.

DEC. 4, 11, 18, 25, 2003

STATEMENT FILE A-0271667-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Linda Jewelry, 121 O'Farrell Street San Francisco, Ca. 94102. This business is conducted by an individual signed Demin Li. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on 11/24/03. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 11/24/2003.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 01, 2003

STATEMENT FILE A-0271739-00

The following person(s) are doing business as: Universal Biologics, Global, Inc. 2. J. Line, Inc., 1006 Sutter Street, San Francisco, Ca. 94109. This business is conducted by a corporation signed Kathie Wong. The registrant(s) commenced to transact business under the above listed fictitious business name or names on NA. The statement was filed with the City and County of San Francisco, Ca. on 11/26/2003.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 01, 2003

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
STATE OF CALIFORNIA IN AND
FOR THE COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO

FILE NO. CASE #540720
In the Matter of the Application of Yisrael Ben Avraham for Change of Gender. The application of Application of Yisrael Ben Avraham for change of gender from female to male, having been filed in Court, and it appearing from said application that Yisrael Ben Avraham has filed an application proposing that his/her gender be changed from female to male. Now therefore, it is hereby ordered and directed, that all persons interested in said matter do appear before this Court in Room 218 on the 20th day of January, 2004, at 9:00 am of said day to show cause why the application for gender change (female to male) should not be granted.

DEC. 11, 18, 25, JAN 1, 2003

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BAY AREA REPORTER



BOB ROSS remembered



1934 – 2003



From left, New Mexico Governor Toney Anaya, Bob Ross, and Tom Horn



Late SF Police Commissioner Jo Daly, Wayne Friday, Bob Ross, and Tom Horn



President Bill Clinton, Bob Ross, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, and her husband, Richard Blum



San Francisco Superior Court Judge Kay Tsenin, left, with Bob Ross in 2000

BARBARA J. PHOTOGRAPHICS

The importance of being Chi Chi
The oeuvres of porn director Chi Chi
LaRue dissected, in 'Karrnal Knowledge.'
page 35

With Kidd gloves
Book designer/superstar
Chip Kidd is considered.
page 33



San Francisco giant
BAR publisher/co-founder
Bob Ross is remembered.
pages 26, 34, 36



ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

BAY AREA REPORTER

Vol. 33 • No. 51 • 18 December 2003



Channeling Hedwig

John Cameron Mitchell appears at the Castro for 'A Hed-Wigged Out Xmas'

by Adam Sandel

John Cameron Mitchell likes people who like Hedwig. Writing, directing and starring in the play and film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* earned Mitchell cult-figure status. He relates with some delight, "A lot of people who saw it and were affected by it are people I like."

Spending time with fans must also give Mitchell the impression that all Hedwig lore is common knowledge. He responds to the question of how he first conceived of the character, "Don't you know that?"

For the uninitiated, he drew visual inspiration for the character from the German ex-prostitute who was his babysitter when he was a 14-year-old boy growing up in Kansas. Mitchell developed his story of the transgendered punk-rock over four years.

The film version of *Hedwig* has now spawned the holiday extravaganza *A Hed-Wigged Out Xmas*, which will be performed Friday night at the Castro Theatre.

High-camp impresario Marc Huestis pro-

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Alexis Rodriguez-Duarte

Out of darkest New Jersey

Lesbian comic Judy Gold plays SF

by Richard Dodds

Judy Gold is always at the ready to defend New Jersey, but the defense wavers when it comes to her Garden State hometown of Clark.

"It was abnormal suburbia," she said. "It was as if when they were putting up real estate they said, 'Let's get the worst people in the entire world to live in this one area. And then let them torture Judy Gold.'"

That's a background with at least two obvious career trajectories: psychopath and comic. Judy Gold chose the latter, and will again be sparing the world of bloodshed when she returns to San Francisco for the first time since taping an HBO special here in 1995.

"I'm brutally honest," she said. "I can't lie on stage, ever."

The 41-year-old writer-comedian is one of the headliners at the 11th annual evening of *Kung Pao Kosher Comedy*, an event based on the Jewish-American tradition of heading to a Chinese restaurant while their neighbors do Christmas. This year's event takes place Dec.

24-27 at the New Asia Restaurant, and also features Ed Crasnick, Bruce Smirnoff, and *Kung Pao* founder Lisa Geduldig.

"They had asked me to do it for a few years in a row," Gold said recently from New York, "and I couldn't, because I had a newborn."

Gold's kids are now 7 and 2, and she's rearing them with her partner of 18 years, Sharon Callahan. Ever since becoming a parent, Gold has been adding to the lesbian references in her standup act.

"I never wanted to be pigeonholed as a 'gay comic,' because my comedy really wasn't about my sexuality," she said. "But you base your comedy on life experiences, and as your life changes, so does your act. Now I have a lot of material about being a gay mom and being with Sharon for 18 years."

Not that there haven't been some protests. "My 7-year-old comes to a lot of the shows, and now that I talk about him on stage, he's been getting really pissed off. He doesn't really understand the joke, but he hears his name, and he's like, 'That really hurts my feelings.' I

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SECOND OF TWO SECTIONS

Giant of the gay press passes

Gone but not forgotten: B.A.R. publisher Bob Ross

by Roberto Friedman

Out There is not going to go as far as to say that BAR publisher/co-founder Bob Ross was a father figure to us, except in the very real sense that he was a father figure to the whole gay movement. He was a true visionary in that very early on, he foresaw a time when full civil rights would have to be granted to gays, lesbians, bisexuals, transgenders and queers — and he even got used to seeing that last word

in headlines. As much as anyone, Ross was responsible for turning San Francisco into a town where we, as gays, demand and get true political power. He made sure we have pull and muscle where we really need it, in high places. That set the pace for the rest of the nation to catch up.

Not incidentally, Ross was also a generous patron of the arts, in ways public (helping commission Elliot Goldenthal's score for San Francisco Ballet's *Othello*) and never made public (endowing a scholarship at the SF Ballet

School). From our perspective here at the arts desk, he was always supportive of our efforts to put out a full and piquant arts section. He was a publisher who never meddled in content issues on our watch. He loved and attended the SF Ballet, San Francisco Opera, San Francisco Symphony, and Santa Fe Opera. He collected Asian art. He traveled extensively, and his outlook was worldly and expansive. He told colorful stories of going on European tours with the Ballet, where dancers confided about their love lives to him over drinks and cigars.

We're not going to pretend that Mr. Ross didn't sometimes lose his temper, spectacularly, as who has not who works on a newspaper? But he never lost his marbles, which is more unusual than you might think in the world of print. He was a believer in the importance of an independent gay press, a pioneer in the still new and vibrant strain of gay journalism. The BAR is his legacy to the community. Also not a small thing: he always paid writers, photos, editors, and staff promptly, with checks still good when you cashed them.

"The checks, although minuscule, were always on time, and in my stories, I could use any word in the English language," agrees arts writer Bob Julian. "For a writer, that linguistic *carte blanche* is priceless. Bob had his own vision of what the Bay Area Reporter should be. And although it only occasionally coincided with my own, I always appreciated his dedication to the publication, and his determination that the voices of lesbian, gay, bisexual people would not be silenced."

Former BAR arts writer George Heymont comments, "Underneath his tough and often bluntly sadistic exterior was a generous man with an extremely big heart who loved



The old school paved the way for the new: Bob Ross, Marlena, and Ginger

opera, respected intelligence, and would not let anyone push him around simply because he was gay. Bob always dealt from a position of power, and he inspired legions of gay men and lesbians to follow suit in business, politics, and in the pursuit of their professional goals."

"I met Bob Ross six times," notes theatre writer Richard Dodds, "at each of the BAR's holiday parties. At the first, after only a few weeks of writing for the paper, I got a box of Godiva chocolates and a bonus check. I misted a bit." Arts writer Tavo Amador remembers meeting Bob partyside 30 years ago and bonding over a shared love for Beluga caviar. Film writer David Lamble remembers the year Bob passed out dictionaries as party favors. Music writer Phil Campbell says Bob was "bigger than life." Everyone we spoke with last week had some memory or anecdote. He cast a large shadow.

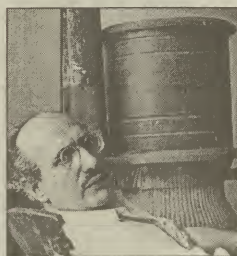
So we're not gonna kid you: It's been rough sledding this year here at the old Bay Area Reporter. Not only are we now bereft of our guiding light, we're still somewhat shell-shocked from the untimely death of former BAR news editor Mike Salinas this past summer. Salinas hired us on to the BAR editorial staff and in many ways was a real mentor to us. One day at the office, as we bent over the dictionary in pursuit of a word, Mike snuck up behind us and gave us a great big smack on the seat of our pants. Plucked, we demanded to know why. He gave us a faux-naive look and said, "Because I just couldn't help myself!"

Very soon now, we'll put this week's Arts & Entertainment section to bed (send it off to the printers) and head over to the bar at the Blue Muse, where this year's holiday party will transpire. We're sure there'll be many a glass raised

in toast to the dear departed. But more than a wake, we expect it to be a celebration — of Bob's and Mike's incredible contributions to the gay movement, to the gay press, and to this wicked little town.

This mortal coil

Stop the presses and ready the headline type: Acclaimed Abstract Expressionist Artist Returns from the Dead! At least that's according to the *San Francisco Chronicle*'s "Scene" column, whose surreal jottings last week informed the world that SF society doyenne "Frances Bowes loves a party, and who doesn't? She just likes to go farther than most to find her fun. She and husband John were in New York City for the Dia Art Foundation Gala, held at Dia: Chelsea. Big-time artists (Francesco Clemente, Mark Rothko, Richard Serra), big-



Artist Mark Rothko in 1953

time fashion designers (Helmut Lang, Zac Posen), and big-time movie producers (Robert Altman, Sofia Coppola) were among the guests."

Just wait until the Rothko Estate hears about this! Never mind that the artist's death by his own hand in 1970 is still regarded as one of the great tragedies of Modern Art; born in 1903, even if Mark Rothko had gone on to live to a ripe old age, today he'd be some wild and crazy 100-year-old partying it up with Sofia at Dia!

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MUSIC

From the sublime to the ridiculous

Igor Stravinsky yields to P.D.Q. Bach at Davies Symphony Hall

by Philip Campbell

Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas returned briefly from hiatus two weeks ago to conduct an all-Stravinsky program in San Francisco. Then he was off again to make a guest appearance with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, bringing his magnificent Mahler Sixth to the new Disney Hall.

Considering reports that the flu bug has struck him, this whirl of activity only illustrates his phenomenal level of energy and dedication. Hopefully, his health will be perfect when he returns. It certainly posed no threat to the recent concerts here.

Opening with the *Four Etudes for Orchestra*, MTT firmly re-established his credentials with Stravinsky. The witty and concise pieces ranged from the solemn "Canticum" to the rhythmically sensuous "Madrid." The orchestra responded predictably with crisp and elegant playing.

The remainder of the program was given to large scale and brilliant adaptations of other composers' works. Tchaikovsky and Pergolesi were effectively recomposed for *The Fairy's Kiss* and *Pulcinella*; the results became pure Stravinsky. It has been said that the composer never wrote an original melody (not true), but he really cut loose with the wealth of tunes in both scores.

The Tchaikovsky *Divertimento* (a satisfying suite of dances from the full score) is a charming work



MTT shows phenomenal energy.

that benefits from Stravinsky's brilliant orchestration. It's difficult to tell where one composer leaves off and the other begins; that would only be a problem for academics. MTT has already proven his skills with both, and the performance was delightful.

The second half of the bill presented the complete *Pulcinella* featuring mezzo-soprano Irina Mishura, tenor Vsevolod Grivnov and bass-baritone Juha Uusitalo. Try to say those names fast! All three displayed big voices, perhaps a shade too big for the mate-

rial, but Tilson Thomas supported them admirably with full-bodied playing from the orchestra.

Mad professor

Going from the sublime to the ridiculous: No sooner had MTT left Davies Hall than it was taken over by the manic silliness of Professor Peter Schickele (b. 1935) and an evening devoted to the works of P.D.Q. Bach (1807-1742?).

Schickele is a serious composer in his own right, but his scholarly devotion is given to the least of Johann Sebastian Bach's 20-odd children, P.D.Q. For four decades he has tirelessly unearthed (dug up is more like it) such treasures as the *Unbegun Symphony* and *Variations on an Unusually Simple-minded Theme*.

The latest find, the *Safe Sextet*, opened the Professor's well-attended concert last week, but the mood of joviality had already been set by the Mantovani-style mood music that filled the Hall before the performance.

Schickele charged down the aisle with a ladder to climb hurriedly onstage. I remember once when the Professor made his entrance swinging to the podium on a rope like a crazed, longhair Tarzan.

Aided by semi-conductor Edwin Outwater, off-coloratura soprano Michele Eaton, tenor profundo David Dusing and manager of the stage William Walters (who flirted with concertmaster Nadya Tichman), the Professor-managed to make it

through a strenuous program of remarkably awful music.

Great praise must also go to the wonderfully good-natured Symphony musicians who joined in the attack. Keyboardist Robin Sutherland was a standout next to the standup Professor.

No matter how stale the jokes or detestable the puns, I defy anyone, even those who know nothing of classical music, to keep a straight face throughout one of Schickele's zany workouts. He is the last comic standing in a tradition of musical lampoonery honed to perfection by the likes of Victor Borge and Anna Russell.

Judging by the hilarity spread-

ing through Davies Hall, no one cares if the Professor's act could use a little tightening or updating. *The Twelve Quite Heavenly Songs (Director's Cut)*, devoted to signs of the Zodiac, were the only serious misstep in the performance. My real concern is that the good Professor will be able to continue retrieving P.D.Q.'s work for future generations. The "Soused" period will undoubtedly yield more forgotten or reviled scores.

I want Schickele to share his "intellectual guidance" for a long time to come. I'd much rather turn kids on to his twisted mind for a holiday treat than another candy-coated *Nutcracker*. ▼

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Sounds for the holidays

Yuletide music out on CD: a short list

by Jason Serinus

Though a shaky economy and eroding profits have left the music industry suing illegal downloaders, celebration time again graces us with a generous helping of holiday recordings. Absorbing the beauties of this music can inspire us to connect with the love at the center of all great spiritual teachings.

Wolcum Yule, Anonymous 4 (Harmonia Mundi) The chart-topping Anonymous 4 women's vocal quartet returns with a lovely collection of Celtic and British songs and carols. Johanna Maria Rose's liner notes point to the pagan, pre-Christian origins of music associated with the Celtic winter solstice celebration. In fact, the word carol originally referred to the ancient ritual circle dances and call-and-response chanting used in year-round ceremonies.

Tydings Trew, Lionheart (Koch) The six-man, NYC-based Lionheart a cappella vocal ensemble began nine years ago when several of its members came together to sing chant, and has become one of the finest male ensembles specializing in medieval and modern repertoire. This beautiful assemblage of medieval English carols and motets is graced by a unanimity of vision that produces truly heart-centered singing.

Classic Country Christmas (Time Life Music) Tammy Wynette's "White Christmas," sung

with a whisky-tinged voice that can tear your heart out, paves the way for Elvis' "Blue Christmas," Dolly Parton's "Hard Candy Christmas," and 17 other offerings. Contributions by Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson and other unforgettables make this collection hard to beat.

A Hanukkah Celebration (Naxos) This assemblage of traditional and original settings by Jewish composers is one of 50 CDs expected from the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music. More than 600 works written by over 200 composers have been newly recorded, most for the first time or in new reconstructions or arrangements. The music of Kurt Weill, Darius Milhaud and Leonard Bernstein figures prominently among early releases.

A Windham Hill Christmas II (BMG Arista) Classic Windham Hill, which means mellow renditions of Christmas favorites with a nouveau sense of space. Guitarist and Windham Hill founder Alex de Grassi joins David Cullen for a guitar duet of "I Wonder as I Wander," guitarist Steve Erquiaga strums the most laid-back "Joy to the World" imaginable; and Philip Aaberg's non-sexist "God Rest Ye Merry" evokes rolling Montana plains. Other well-known artists include Liz Story, Barbara Higbie, Tracy Silverman, and the inevitable George Winston. Perfect background for vegan eggnog around a non-polluting fire.

Sir John Tavener: Ikon of

Eros, Minnesota Orchestra and Chorale, Paul Goodwin, cond. (Reference) Gorgeous, mystical music with the power to entrance. Sir John Tavener, a follower of the Greek Orthodox faith, writes simple, repetitive compositions that embody the spiritual essence of prayer. Around fine contributions from baritone Tim Krol, strange-voiced soprano Patricia Rozario, and sweet-toned violinist Jorja Fleezanis, the chorus intones the Greek words for Transfiguration, Eros (Divine Love), Ecstasy, and the unending song of the angels.

Christmas with the Tallis Scholars (Gimell) This two-disc collection features the angelic-sounding a cappella mixed voice ensemble Tallis Scholars, specializing in medieval and Renaissance vocal music. The first CD offers an all-English program from their *Christmas Carols and Motets* recording, and includes medieval carols and polyphony by Josquin and Verdelot. The second disc is devoted to plainchant and music based on chant, culminating in a major mass by Tallis.

Joy to the World (Naxos) This winning compilation of 20 familiar Christmas carols features four different church choirs and ensembles, chief among them the Worcester Cathedral Choir and the Choir of Tewkesbury Abbey. Everything is sincerely, lovingly performed, the Elora Festival Singers' "Silent Night" exceedingly tender. ▼

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Three women

'Triptych' at the Magic

by Richard Dodds

Triptych might have been better off as a *Diptych*. Edna O'Brien's new play at the Magic Theatre can be riveting when the focus is on an obsessive wife and a determined mistress, but rings false when a rebellious daughter is brought on stage as the trip in this *tych*.

O'Brien is a well-known novelist whose early reputation stems from the early 1960s, when her books were banned in her native Ireland for their frank examinations of female sexuality.

It is an all-woman cast in *Triptych* — we never see the man over whom the three characters so seriously fret — and O'Brien seems interested in how these women cope in their relationships to a shared male force.

This is not exactly a feminist perspective as we have come to expect it. But O'Brien does suggest the considerable cost in the compromises these women must make as they search for an equilibrium that will satisfy their different needs. Unfortunately, O'Brien then upends this exploration by abruptly killing off one of the principals.

The 90-minute play shuttles between a stylish Manhattan apartment and a theater's dressing

room. The first scene takes place in the dressing room as an actress receives an unexpected visitor. It is the vengefully jealous wife at the beginning of a battle plan made up of disruption and mind games. The actress, for her part, pays a high price to maintain the romantic remnants she is afforded.

In director Paul Whitworth's production, looking a bit cramped on Kate Edmunds' set, Julia Brothers and Lise Bruneau are terrific in their battle scenes together. Brothers plays a chic wife as a desperate and frightening defender of her realm. Bruneau gives an air of sophisticated superiority to the actress/mistress that camouflages her own desperation. As the teen daughter, Tro M. Shaw neither acts nor looks like a teenager, and the playwright does not provide much help with the character's artificial-sounding dialogue.

This production is the world premiere of a contemporary play that nonetheless feels rooted in feminine sensibilities of several decades ago. In *Triptych*, you haven't come a long way, baby. ▼

Triptych will run at the Magic Theatre through Jan. 4. Tickets are \$24-\$38. Call 441-8822 or go to magictheatre.org.



An all-woman cast (Tro M. Shaw, Julia Brothers, and Lise Bruneau) brings Edna O'Brien's new play to life.

Unbelievable Berlioz

by Tim Pfaff

The music industry is in no shape to take on the Berlioz year in the manner it once would have, a particular pity since most of the artists necessary for this big, visionary music are around. Only the LSO Live series, drawn from concerts over the last three years, has issued substantial amounts of top-drawer Berlioz, led by Sir Colin Davis, for more than three decades the composer's most indefatigable champion. Still, two new CDs, Valery Gergiev's molten *Symphonic fantastique* (Philips) and Pierre Boulez's pellucid yet passionate *Roméo et Juliette* (DG), show the power of this singular music when its interpreters, like its composer, are true musical revolutionaries.

The two works are the composer's direct tributes to the love of his life, Harriet Smithson, whom he first saw performing Shakespeare's Juliet and Ophelia, in English, in Paris. The *Fantastique* is a phantasmagoric account of what Berlioz then took to be unrequited love on her part, *Roméo et Juliette* his apostrophe to romantic love at its most ardent, recalled when the required love was waning.

More than a century and a half later, the *Fantastique* is still not for the faint of heart. As the current master of the creepy, Valery Gergiev is the ideal interpreter of this dramatic work. This live performance with the Vienna Phil-



harmonic jumps to the top of a large heap with a performance of scalding intensity, latent danger, and frequently terrifying impact.

Few other orchestras could play as full-out as this without the sound fraying, but the VPO is as magnificent in the gossamer passages of this contrast-rich piece as it is in its ear-splitting climaxes. Gergiev gets the winds to howl with disturbing, eerily human sounds. Their shrieks throughout the final "Witches' Sabbath" movement are at the limit of the endurable, and the clattering bows on the string instruments yield an equally horrifying effect.

In the end, it's his masterful pacing of the piece that gives it its real torque. Gergiev never loses the thread of the narrative in the wash of sound, and his almost steely sense of proportion in this music at the very edge of the orchestra's expressive possibilities is what drives this unforgettable reading.

The CD concludes with a searing, operatic account of Berlioz's

La Mort de Cléopâtre, a so-called "lyric scene" a great mezzo can turn into a 20-minute tour de force. Olga Borodina, one of Gergiev's longest-term collaborators, is just such a singer. Borodina unleashes floodtides of one of the most luscious voices of our day. Digging deep into the character, Borodina sings and acts a Cleopatra of real stature: feminine, yes, but imperious as well. The text is by Pierre Viellard, but this is Shakespeare's Queen of the Nile.



Wherefore art thou

If there were singing of anything like that caliber in the new *Roméo et Juliette*, Berlioz's great Shakespearean extravaganza (also set to French text, by Emile Deschamps), it would be as essential a recording. There was a time when "French style" actually meant something, but globalization has taken care of that. Still, Pierre Boulez is as brilliantly French as musicians get and, like Berlioz, a dyed-in-the-wool revolutionary. He grasps this sprawling score and charts a clear course, start to finish.

The playing by the Cleveland Orchestra is equally top-notch. The famous "Queen Mab" Scherzo is the least of it. The long second and third movements, about the love of the two title characters (who do not appear as voices), are often aching in their beauty. Boulez has a way of snatching a telling detail out of the score and bringing it to the foreground, adding depth to the larger picture.

But, apart from tenor Kenneth Traver's remarkable invocation of Mab, the singing ranges from weak to execrable. Denis Sedov as Friar Lawrence (the only singer with a named role) drags down the final scene so far that even orchestra and chorus at full cry for the finale can't save the day. The filler is *Les Nuits d'été*, with the same soloists (including Melanie Diener). There's nothing hot about these summer nights, which are merely late and tired. ▼

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BOOKS

Passionate love, tropical truths

Some recommended reading on music and dance

by Stephanie von Buchau

Every year I have at least half a dozen hot books about classical music and dance to suggest for holiday giving, but this season the pickings are slim. Face it, possums, classical music is currently in a Slough of Despond, with fewer CDs, lowered attendance and even the San Francisco Symphony announcing red figures for the first time in ages. Still, here are a few artistic choices:

Ballet for Dummies by Scott Speck and Evelyn Cisneros; Wiley, \$19.99 This entertaining series varies in authenticity and readability, but Speck (a former San Francisco Ballet conductor) and Cisneros (SFB's reigning ballerina for many years) are so expert they can afford to joke around and still deliver hard-core info.

They cover everything from both dancers' and viewers' vantage points. History, what to carry in your dance bag, positions and steps from basic stretching to grand jete (illustrated by SFB's Stephen Legate and Leslie Young), mime, choreography, music, cocktail party gossip, what to eat and drink before a performance, how to dress and much more.

Their choices for 10 Best-Loved Classical Ballets are classic,

and the choices for 10 Great "Contemporary" Ballets are eclectic and mostly in SFB repertory. Down-to-earth advice about attending ballet makes the book a joy to read. Most of us already know this stuff, but if you have a budding ballet fan in your sights, *Ballet for Dummies* will turn him into an expert without pain.

Eleonora Duse by Helen Sheehy; Knopf, \$32.50 The first biography in two decades of the legendary Italian diva who revolutionized the art of acting, inspired and popularized Chekhov and Ibsen, and encouraged Stanislavski to create his famous acting school, is less about acting than about Duse's life as a woman in a profession that regarded females as little better than whores.

Drawing on newly discovered materials, and applying a feminist approach that is insistent but not overwrought, Sheehy describes the dynamo born on tour (near Milano in 1858) who rose to international heights (though she acted only in Italian, she was the favorite actress of Chaplin, Swanson, Barrymore). The author insists that Duse (pronounced "DEW-zay") was not the "misty, tragic heroine victimized by men" we usually read about, but you could have fooled me.

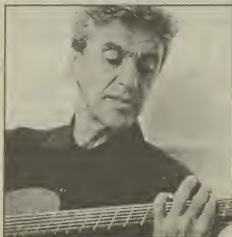
Duse was as well-known for



Eleonora Duse, Italian dynamo

her passionate love affairs as for her acting. Most of the men (and a few women) in her life were your basic cads. The poet Gabriele d'Annunzio, love of her life, treated her like dirt. Alas, Sheehy doesn't cite my favorite Duse-D'Annunzio exchange, when she was

wounded that he reproduced her vocalizations during love-making in a novel. The incorrigible writer replied: "Novels come from life, my dear. Would you prefer me to sleep with someone else to get material?"



Caetano Veloso, inspired soul

Tropical Truth by Caetano Veloso; Knopf, \$26 If you are not familiar with the great Brazilian composer and singer Caetano Veloso, think back to this year's Academy Awards, where he appeared in the usually dismal song category. I was so taken with this handsome, middle-aged dude that I went on the Net to get a collection of his music and found this autobiography, subtitled *A Story of Music & Revolution in Brazil*.

Caetano (as everybody at home in Bahia and Rio calls him) is more than just a pop music figure. Inspired by the bossa nova master Joao Gilberto, the young singer joined like-minded artists Maria Bethania, Gilberto Gil, Gal Costa and various poets, novelists and film luminaries in creating *tropicalismo*, a musical and political movement of the '60s that got

them jailed and exiled but eventually helped turn Brazil into a more open, free nation.

Sexy, outspoken, intellectual (he frequently stops his narrative to tell you what he was reading at the time), Caetano's book is mostly about the "movement." I would suggest listening to his music — an original amalgam of Brazilian musical styles blended with Anglo-American pop — first, then you'll understand the extraordinary political and social upheaval he spearheaded.

I Never Walked Alone by Shirley Verrett; Wiley, \$30 Verrett was one of a handful of great mezzo sopranos in the last half of the 20th century, and we heard her frequently at SFO. Though this *Autobiography of an American Singer* generally follows the "Then I met and then I sang" style of diva memoir, the fact that Verrett chose Christopher Brooks, associate professor of African American studies at Virginia Commonwealth University, as her collaborator raises the political-social ante without diminishing the artistic story. Photos and discography included. ▼

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Judy Gold

Arts cover

act like, OK, I won't do it anymore, but I do. Meanwhile, the one who should be upset is my mother, but she loves it."

Her mom, still of Clark, NJ, is a big source of material. "Each visit with her, I'll get at least one joke out of it because she is completely out of her mind," said the daughter. "But she knows she's funny."

Sharon, on the other hand, sometimes winces at Gold's frank discussions of their life together. "The last time she saw my act, she was like, 'Can you not do that material when I'm in the audience?' I'm like, no, tough shit."

Gold met her future partner when they both worked for a company that sold advertising in military newspapers. "Half the people had lunch at Noon, and

half the people had lunch at one. I got there and they all loved me because it was all fags who worked there, and they were like, you have to have lunch with us at one. And Sharon, who had worked there longer than me, complained that now she had to have lunch at Noon. I asked her to lunch so she wouldn't think I was an asshole."

Sharon had just broken up with a boyfriend, and Gold first talked about her own relationships without identifying a gender. "I finally told her, and a couple of days later she put a post-it note on my desk, and it says, 'I'm in love with you.' She kind of ran after me, which was nice for a change."

With two kids and a partner at home, Gold has grown picky about out-of-town gigs. "Being on the road is really a stepping stone, and I've done it, and it served its purpose," she said. "It's not glamorous. It's shit."

Her post-road activities have included hosting HBO's *At the Metrolplex*, writing and producing *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, and a stint as a sitcom regular on Margaret Cho's *All American Girl*.

She almost had a deal with the Oxygen cable channel for a sitcom based around her life with Sharon, the kids, her friends, and her mom.

"There are no stereotypes in it," Gold said. "And I know this is shocking, but we don't discuss being gay for 30 minutes, and I don't wear a flannel shirt. I just want to get a show on television where people forget they're watching gay people." ▼

Kung Pao Kosher Comedy will run Dec. 24-27 at the New Asia Restaurant. Tickets are \$50 (dinner shows) and \$35 (cocktail shows). Call 522-3737 or go to koshercomedy.com.

Out There

page 26

Hotel California

We stumbled out of the rain and into a hotel opening the other night, feeling like a rare throw-back to those days in the late dot-com boom when boutique hotels blossomed in the streets of San Francisco like particularly hearty wildflowers. The erstwhile **Hotel Richelieu** on Van Ness Ave., once home to bustling crews of United stewards on furlough, was newly remodeled and re-opening as the latest in a chain of **La Quinta** accommodations, targeted to a more generalized market.

Though we double-checked and the invitation had stipulated business attire, that category apparently included the Good Guys uniforms on two guys stopping in after work up the avenue. They looked mahvelous in their dark

knit shirts with Good Guys logo and pressed khakis, and they reinforced our prevailing opinion that working-class folk tend to tip bartenders more conscientiously than, say, hotel corporation CEOs. Anyway, Out There missed out on snagging the hotel's junior suite during the raffle drawing, but we're glad that the dude from the York Hotel won, really. But that was our cue to re-immense ourselves into the tempest raging outside, and make our way back down SF's very own *Champs d'Elisee*. At least that's what **DiFi** always called it.

Tupper where?

Old-school punker **Phranc** continues to pile up labels from those who would try to pigeon-hole her. Call her surfer dude, call her bitch dyke, or call her folksinging Tupperware Lady, Phranc headlines at Cafe Du Nord, 2170 Market St., on Saturday, December 20. Show starts at 9



Phranc headlines acoustic set

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Sandra (Judith Ivey), half of what appears to be a nice older couple in a roomy RV, may have more in mind than just being a Good Samaritan for Alice (Emily Grace) in writer/director A. Dean Bell's *What Alice Found*.

Driven to distraction

'What Alice Found' out on the road

by David Lamble

When we first meet Alice (Emily Grace), she seems like an ordinary working-class teenager who has saved up for a trip to Florida, where she plans to stay with a female friend and perhaps go to school. Writer/director A. Dean Bell astutely allows us to see and experience the story through Alice's eyes. Maybe Alice's Ford Escort isn't up to the trip from New Hampshire; maybe she really isn't so close to her friend; did the red-necks ogling her a few miles back

sabotage her car at the truck stop? Maybe she should let that nice older couple escort her along the first leg of her trip across the Mason-Dixon Line.

What Alice Found, opening Friday, is that most succulent of mysteries, the character-driven story whose joys are to be found in ever-deepening suspense about human beings we sort of like but don't really know or necessarily trust. Alice is not a college student preparing to become a marine biologist. While there are no dolphins in her future, there are some scary things in the immediate past. Through some well-executed flashbacks and roadside phone calls, we learn that Alice has stolen money from her last employer, that the friend doesn't want to put her up, and that the nice couple, Sandra (Judith Ivey) and Bill (Bill Raymond), may be more than Samaritans trying to stretch their pension dollars in their rather roomy RV.

Just as in the underappreciated *L.I.E.*, it is precisely when a teenager learns how dangerous things may get with a new adult in their lives that they also discover the precarious but real freedom this liaison may offer. Veteran stage actor Ivey at first makes Sandra the kind of motherly older best friend a girl might have had if she had grown up on the set of *Steel Magnolias*. Then Alice gets the makeover: a sexy red dress, eye-shadow, and hairdo; and she starts to enjoy being pampered.

When a gangly young man invites her to hop up into his big rig and then gives her money for her time, Alice wakes up to the reality that she is a teen hooker. Sandra lays down the house rules, includ-

ing one that really upsets Alice: that all her earnings must be locked up in the RV for "safekeeping."

Mind the gap

What distinguishes *What Alice Found* from a host of B films about good girls gone bad (or any episode of *The Jerry Springer Show*) is filmmaker Bell's willingness to violate the rules of melodrama. Sandra and Bill are not white slavers, and Alice's tricks are not deserters from the Serbian army. Ivey steals the film with a heart-on-her-sleeve sincerity which shows that Sandra's motives are not evil but merely practical. On some level, she really does see Alice as a kind of an adopted daughter, but a daughter who must confront the gap between her dreams and her employable skills. Unlike another movie Alice (Ellen Burstyn in *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*), this Alice doesn't have a cowboy on a white horse ready to scoop her up in his saddle and plop her down into a middle-class ranch-house, just in time for the closing credits.

What Alice Found stops far short of endorsing prostitution for the upwardly mobile working girl. But director Bell does strip from his depiction of the oldest profession the pious, demonizing, sanctimonious sentimentality that is the moral currency of most films on the subject (Jane Fonda's memorable role in *Klute* the rare exception). As Alice, lying on her back on Sandra's pull-out bed in the RV, glances up at her john, she sees a skinny boy-man who, in another time and place, she might have dated. Now, together, they're just working the night shift. ▼

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The lavender tube in review, 2003

by Victoria A. Brownworth

With holidays just days away and the New Year looming just beyond, the time for reflection is, perforce, upon us. TV may not seem to be worthy of reflection, yet it nevertheless remains the single most influential source of information, as well as the foundation for nearly every pop culture reference on the planet. Even if you are one of the handful of elitists still claiming not to watch, TV will still touch your world. Remember how we all sneered when George Bush said he didn't watch TV down in Crawford, Texas? After all, why would the President need to know what's going on in the world?

In 2003, TV moved just a little closer to being as oppressive a force in our lives as it was in Ray Bradbury's futuristic classic *Fahrenheit 451*, in which TV was both interactive and determinative. The desire to be a part of the world created by TV and the instant celebrity it confers has become an American addiction.

Witness last week's TV wedding of Trista and Ryan, the couple created by reality TV on ABC's *The Bachelor*. Their successful love match was a marriage made in ratings heaven. The \$4 million extravaganza garnered more promotion and sponsors than a Presidential election. It might also have generated more interest. The attractively vapid couple have mesmerized viewers for nearly a year. But who are they? A pretty average Jane and her hunky average Joe. TV made them famous.

Celebrity had already been bestowed on Paris Hilton and Nicole Ritchie at birth, but our new guilty pleasure and the second-best reality TV show of 2003, FOX's *The Simple Life*, debuted two weeks ago to phenomenal ratings. Paris and Nicole have

been set down in a small town in Arkansas, where their inability to comprehend the lives of those around them who must work minimum-wage jobs for a living makes the show both hilarious and a sociological exercise.

Our pick for best reality show of 2003, *Queer Eye for the Straight Guy*, knocked our several-season favorite, *Survivor*, out of the running. Could we have loved the Marine makeover more? The little ditty about his shoes was too much!

For several seasons, pundits have intoned that reality TV is over, but 2003 was its biggest year yet. Last week's NBC Christmas special from Rockefeller Center was a TV show within a TV show, including Nick and Jessica (she is so lucky she can sing, because that stupid "act" isn't); the cast of the *Today* show; and, lighting the Christmas tree in an art-imitates-life-imitates-politics moment, the faux President and his faux First Lady from *The West Wing*.

Briefly noted

This year, queer TV was suddenly *de rigueur*. *Queer Eye* became an instant hit; Isaac Mizrahi was on every talk show in America as the new designer for Target, proving that he can outgay everyone; Ellen came back, better than ever with a surprisingly funny talk show in which her queerness is always in evidence. Her underwear exchange with Tom Cruise last week (she wears boxers, he wears briefs) was gay.

All *My Children* deserves kudos for maintaining a queer storyline on a daytime soap opera. The intricate revelation and exploration of Bianca Montgomery's lesbianism has been building for over three years now,

but in 2003 it was AMC's pivot, linked to every other story on the show. Eden Reigel, a Harvard girl who has given her heart and soul to the role of Bianca, has explicated queer life better than any reality show. Reigel has made the character a fully developed young woman in conflict: not over being a lesbian, but over the impact her lesbianism has had on her friends and family.

Bianca's story took a disturbing turn this year when the character was brutally raped. Why rape the virginal lesbian? we wrote. But the storyline has expanded and

broadened both the range of the character and the parameters of what it means to be queer in America. Daughter of the star, related to other major characters, Bianca can't be dismissed as marginal. Everyone has an opinion on her queerness, just like in real life. Bianca's decision not to abort when she found she was pregnant with her rapist's child was motivated in part by her belief that she wouldn't, as a lesbian, have another opportunity to have a baby. Ultimately, AMC did in daytime what prime time has yet to do: put a queer character at the center of an otherwise straight drama, and fashion the straight characters' stories around her.

Not so the ill-conceived *It's All Relative*. The ABC sitcom attempted to cash in on the queer

trend but has only furthered the stereotyping of queers on TV. One of the worst TV shows of '03.

War room

Queer TV got the queen's share of the press this year, but another major event dominated TV: the war on Iraq. There has been phenomenal TV journalism in the trenches as well as terrible lock-step media coverage. NBC has had the most hawkish evening news reports, with Tom Brokaw offering little criticism of the President or the war; ABC, CBS, FOX, PBS and CNN have kept criticism to a minimum as well. Only BBC World News offered a more international and non-America-biased reportage of the conflict. However, each network has focused on the servicemen and women and their plights.

ABC's *Nightline*, '03's best news show, delineated the war from variant perspectives. Poignant episodes have depicted the vantage point of the foot-soldiers; reports by a flak-jacketed Ted Koppel during shock-and-awe described the burned bodies of Iraqi soldiers; interviews with maimed reservists now home to a Vietnam-like welcome have provided rich material for what has been stellar reporting.

With a war on, pundits and comedians have had important roles on the tube, and most have done well. Political shows have tried to keep Washington power-brokers and even the Bush Administration honest. Tim Russert of *Meet the Press*, who holds

everyone's feet to the fire regardless of party affiliation, was the best moderator of '03. Late-night comedians also deserve a nod for making it a year of no-holds-barred jabs at the Bush cadre. Tops in '03: Jon Stewart, Bill Maher, Jay Leno, Conan O'Brien and David Letterman. *Saturday Night Live* deserves honorable mention.

Finally, our pick for best prime-time drama of '03, NBC's *ER*, deserves special mention. *ER* has been the only drama to recall that an AIDS epidemic still spreads over the globe, presenting numerous shows on AIDS, including last week's Christmas episode, which focused wholly on AIDS in Africa (though a few jabs at American arrogance and the war on Iraq were not lost on us). *ER* proves that political relevance and good drama are not mutually exclusive.

The new year will elicit more queer programming, more reality TV and, regrettably, more scenes from the war. It will also bring coverage of another Presidential election and, we hope, a more defining criticism of the Bush Administration and its mismanagement of everything from the war to the environment. TV has a responsibility to be critical. Freedom of speech doesn't mean much if we don't exercise our rights to it. TV journalists have an obligation to explore and explain. Thus we hope the new year brings a renewed effort at just such a critique. Now that would be reality TV. ▼



Lavender Tube

Painting faces

by Robert Julian

Keven Aucoin, *A Beautiful Life* by Kerry Diamond, et al.; Atria Books, \$30

It's hard to categorize Keven Aucoin, *A Beautiful Life*, other than to say it is a book with many beautiful pictures of models. Aucoin was the first famous face-painter of the 20th century. There were many makeup artists with great reputations, but most of them were the employees of motion picture studios. Only Aucoin became the great freelance artist of his time, painting the faces of models and actresses for magazines, runways, portraits, and personal appearances. Aucoin began life as the stereotypical gay boy—one whose own concept of the fabulous allowed him to transcend a tormented childhood in rural Louisiana and hobnob with the international glitterati.

A Beautiful Life is something of a multi-purpose volume. Author Kerry Diamond does a nice job of providing a brief seven-chapter biography of Aucoin's life, illustrated by many personal photos. But the biographical information is preceded and followed by personal recollections

from the many actresses and models who knew and loved him. These contributors include Sharon Stone, Julia Roberts, Tina Turner, Gwyneth Paltrow, Naomi Campbell, Winona Ryder, and Christy Turlington. The universal sentiment about the late makeup artist revolves around an appreciation for his talent and his generosity of spirit. He was an ugly duckling, tormented daily in his childhood for being effeminate. And from this experience he grew determined to see the beauty in everyone and everything. Ultimately, his life was dedicated to the pursuit and creation of beauty.

At the end of the book, there is a special illustrated section devoted to the makeup techniques Aucoin perfected. The three different sections of the book would not hold up on their own in individual publications. But in combination, the result is both satisfying and engaging. Aucoin's untimely death in 2002, at the age of 40, was due to complications from a rare disease and the removal of a related tumor. The memory that emerges from the pages of *Keven Aucoin, A Beautiful Life* is that of a kind and unpretentious soul who inspired others to see themselves as beautiful. ▼

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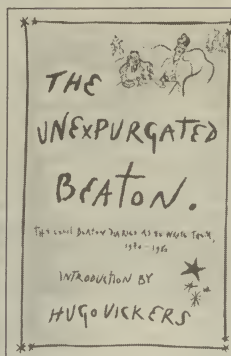
Over and out

by Robert Julian

The Unexpurgated Beaton by Cecil Beaton, Alfred A. Knopf, \$35

With six volumes of diaries published during his lifetime, Cecil Beaton could compete successfully with Anais Nin in an all-about-me contest. The terribly British gay photographer and author had his most notable success as a set and costume designer for stage (*Coco*) and screen (*Gigi*, *My Fair Lady*). But until now, the last decade of Beaton's life was uncharted. For better or worse, author Hugo Vickers pored over Beaton's diaries from 1970 until his death in 1980 and now presents them as they were originally written, edited only for length.

As a diarist, Beaton endlessly polished, edited, and revised his original diaries prior to publication. But Vickers spares the reader any revisionist history, presenting the original text, warts and all. Fortunately for the reader, most of the warts are on the faces of others, and Beaton lives up to his reputation for "Malice in Wonderland." There are interesting episodes involving private meetings with England's Queen Mother (sweet), the Duke and Duchess of Windsor (loved her, hated him), and Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton (*déclassé* swine). Beaton describes watching a latter-day live performance of Mar-



lene Dietrich and begrudgingly pays his respects verbally. But his most vitriolic vivisection is reserved for Katharine Hepburn, the star of *Coco*, whom Beaton loathed without reservation. This section alone, which comprises the first three pages of *The Unexpurgated Beaton*, justifies the purchase of the book.

Yet the bulk of the diary entries during Beaton's last decade reflects an older gay man facing failing health, and dealing with the loss of his peers. Unfortunately for Americans, his peers are predominantly obscure member of British royalty whose comings and goings will hold little interest for most readers.

Palace dreams

During his last decade, Cecil

Beaton emerges as a rather spoiled and self-indulgent old coot who spends his time being entertained by the rich in private homes and estates around the world. During these years, after three Oscars and a Tony, Beaton is finally knighted by Queen Elizabeth. His description of life at Buckingham Palace is the perfect reflection of Beaton's latter-day values and standards: "Everything gleaming, shining, everything under control. What a great feeling this is! In the Palace one feels there is no anxiety, flurry, havoc or disaster. Everyone has such perfect manners, and this makes life so pleasant."

Local gay readers may be amused by Beaton's remarks about a male lover he frequently visited in San Francisco. The man named "Kin" lived at 714 Kansas, on Portrero Hill. Kin was a teacher, a former Olympic fencer, and a graduate of Princeton. They met in 1963 at a San Francisco bar called The Toolbox while Beaton was working in Los Angeles on *My Fair Lady*. Their long-distance affair and correspondence continued until Beaton's death, although meetings were often several years apart.

Ultimately, *The Unexpurgated Beaton* is a trifle. It occasionally amuses but never really engages the intellect or the emotions. Beaton's final decade might best be summed up by modifying an old aphorism: "Life isn't so hard, then you die." ▼



Mitchell is more comfortable now.

J.C. Mitchell

◀ Arts cover

duced the gala, which will include Mitchell reading Truman Capote's "A Christmas Memory"; Hedwig-inspired performances by Hekina, Matthew Martin and Arturo Galster; comic Greg Proops; a Glama-Rama Christmas Pageant; and a screening of the film.

When Huestis approached Mitchell about the show, the actor suggested reading the Capote story, which he's performed before and is one of his favorites. And the rococo Castro Theatre is certainly an ideal setting to experience *Hedwig and the Angry Inch*.

"The two screenings we had of the film at the Castro were the

best," says Mitchell. "That's where she really belongs."

The stage version of *Hedwig* has since played all around the world including Iceland, but Mitchell says, "I don't pay much attention to those productions."

He did see a German production of the play which he found very moving. "There weren't many laughs because it's hard to translate the jokes, but they took it very seriously."

Mitchell enjoys watching other actors play the role that he wrote and originated. "I find it very relaxing," he says. "Some of them have brought out things that I love."

Feminine touch

Although the film was never a big financial success, the experience
next page ►

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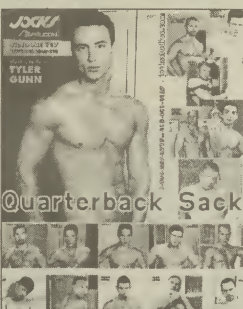
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BOOKS

Bonbons for bibliophiles

by Glen Helfand

Chip Kidd by Véronique Vienne, Yale University Press, \$19.95

Maybe you've noticed that book-shopping has recently become a more eye-tickling experience. The art of the book jacket has become increasingly stylish, sophisticated and fun. It fuels the notion of book lust with glossy ink and clever image juxtapositions. I like to think that sleek book covers also infuse the solitary interactions between writer and reader with a bit of designer sex appeal — the equivalent of wearing something that makes you feel fabulous. While it may be suspect to wholly judge a book by its cover, there's much to admire in the art of capturing a text in its package, especially one that embodies the essence of what's inside.

Book designer Chip Kidd manages the trick with remarkable consistency, and in his two-decade career has the unlikely and very admirable distinction of being a book designer superstar. As a longtime staff designer at Knopf publishing company, he's had a hand in making some of the most memorable dust jackets and glossy sleeves for books that, if you haven't read, you're definitely aware of: *Jurassic Park* by Michael Crichton; David Sedaris' *Naked*; the transparent sheath on Donna Tartt's once-ubiquitous *The Secret History*; and *Jimmy Corrigan*, the elaborate graphic novel by Chris Ware, among many others. You could say that Kidd is the literary-world equivalent of Philippe Starck, putting their skills both to the upper echelons of design as well as more democratic Target markets. Kidd's innovations are rooted in the use of unlikely imagery to intrigue readers by encapsulating the spirit of the text within. He's done it for mega-titles as well



as first novels and Edmund White's *belles lettres* biography of Jean Genet.

Crossover seems to be the emphasis in Yale University Press' recently released book on Kidd. One of two titles in their new series called *Monographics* (the other is devoted to major motion picture title-designer Kyle Cooper), the book is a compact but generously illustrated chronicle of Kidd's career. In a mercifully brief introductory essay by design critic Véronique Vienne, we get biographical information along with the narrative of his professional development. Kidd had formative childhood experiences through his adoration of Batman, the comic book and TV show (and later did a lavish coffee-table book devoted to both).

We learn that he started at Knopf at the tender age of 22 and worked up a reputation fairly quickly, though not without the strange, sometimes uncomfortable undercurrents of becoming a celebrity name in an institutional team of designers that usually remains anonymous. We're even privy to the queer pride fact that Kidd has a stable relationship with a scholar, J.D. McClatchy.

Nightclub casualty

The rest of the book is a collection of full-color illustrations of the work, with short captions that

have the appeal of bonbons for bibliophiles. One of Kidd's signatures is the unconventional, narrative-enhancing use of removable dust jackets. He did the fabulous peek-a-boo jacket for Bret Easton Ellis' *Glamorama* (a book I must admit I bought for the cover alone), of which Vienne writes: "The jacket sleeve, peppered with die-cut gunshots, alludes to the violence of the nightclub scene." The captions cover Kidd's creative inspirations, as well as the authors' reactions to the book-jacket designs, which are briefly noted. Sedaris, we learn, has a hilarious booksigning reflex when fans present him with Kidd's removable boxer-short cover for the hardcover edition of *Naked*. Kidd has a similar response to his own cover for Maggie Paley's irresistibly titled *The Book of the Penis*, for which Kidd deviously devised a peel-off fig leaf (and a ruler printed along the spine).

The selection of works is prodigious; you can't help but be impressed by Kidd's consistently interesting output. He's even written a semi-autobiographical novel, *The Cheese Monkeys*, in which the elaborate book design becomes a playful component in the narrative — apparently, Kidd employed many design ideas that were nixed for other people's books. The fact that the designer has the clout to pull something like this off is yet another reason to admire him. The compact, affordable nature of this volume makes it a coffee-table book that you'll actually read. ▼

J.C. Mitchell

◀ previous page

ence changed Mitchell's life in many ways. "It helped me to be more of the person I want to be," he says. "I'm more comfortable with my feminine side, and less scared of people having power over me."

Mitchell says that the film earned him a lot of offers from Hollywood. "They wanted me to direct the film of *Rent*; they wanted me to be one of the *X-Men*; but I turned them down. It was fun to say no to them."

Although he may be an agent's worst nightmare, the auteur is dedicated to his current work-in-progress, a film initially referred to as *The Sex Project*, now tentatively titled, *The Short Bus*.

A multi-character piece à la Robert Altman, the New York-based film is being written through actor improvisation. "I wanted to make a film that uses real sex — not shy away from it like Hollywood, or glorify it like porn," says Mitchell.

Currently in its year-long writing process, the film should begin shooting, and the actors begin their on-camera coupling, next summer.

Mitchell divides his time between New York and San Francisco, where he spent last sum-

mer writing and will spend the holiday with his family. He dismisses a question about key differences between the two cities, saying, "Everybody knows that," but ultimately notes that he "needs a little of both."

San Francisco holds personal significance for Mitchell, who came out of the closet at age 20 while visiting his brother at USF in 1985. Stified by the frat-house environment, the young actor headed to Polk Street, where he met a mechanic who was a member of the Radical Faeries.

"He invited me to a solstice party, and at first I was scandalized by the idea of orgies," he says. "I stayed at the House of the Golden Bull, the proto-faerie collective in Berkeley. They were making acid punch and rolling joints, and that experience just tore open the closet door for me."

When he finally returned from his adventure, Mitchell told his worried brother, "I'm gay — and I found someone to fix your car."

But doesn't everybody already know that? ▼

A Hed-Wigged Out Xmas benefits Stop AIDS Project, Dec. 19, Castro Theatre. 5:30: Meet & greet; 7:30: Gala. Tickets (\$27.50-\$50): (415) 863-0611 or at A Different Light Bookstore, 489 Castro St.

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Leather columnist Mister Marcus with his *BAR* publisher, the late Bob Ross, at IML 1991 in Chicago. Bob was a champion of the leather/biker community and attended the IML contest several times.

Tribute to a mentor

Bob Ross: biker and leatherman

by Mister Marcus

San Francisco's entire LGBT community was saddened last Wednesday, December 10 when it was learned that Bob Ross, the founding publisher of the *Bay Area Reporter*, had passed away at Davies Hospital after a long and valiant battle with complications due to liver, heart and diabetes problems.

Bob was my champion and my mentor. He plucked me from the relative obscurity I labored in as a bartender in various South of Market leather bars. As the president of the then powerful Tavern Guild, he chose me to chair the second annual fundraiser Circus-Circus and assigned a half-dozen seasoned Guild members to assist me. As it turned out, Circus-Circus made a reasonable profit that year, and it was my successful transition to becoming an activist.

In April of 1971, this newspaper began publishing and became the first LGBT newspaper in the country, and also the biggest. In October of that same year, I came aboard as a columnist for the leather community — a time when there were no leather titles or contests, and the news consisted mainly of the then 13 bike clubs and leather bar gossip (always plenty of that!). I got lots of static for daring to print the names of the clubs — and members of those clubs — and the

Southern California clubs were up in arms over it. But those obstacles were soon overcome and now, a press release about club events is *de rigueur* for every corresponding secretary in clubs around the nation.

The LGBT community of 2003 has absolutely no idea what life was like here for us in 1971. There were perhaps a half-dozen agencies but nothing like the hundreds that exist today. The only leather contest in San Francisco during that period was the Mr. Febe's title and the winner both times was a person that closely resembled the world-famous Febe's statue. He had no official duties and did not advance to a higher level of competition.

The empress was merely a drag queen who "officiated" at events taking place in the bars that belonged to the Tavern Guild. And I won't dare tell you how titleholders of every stripe began doing money-raising events. The "do something with your title" started in 1972 and has come full-force today.

Bob was often a cantankerous personality to deal with. I would be safe in saying that there are personalities still living here who were at one time or another rubbed the wrong way by Bob. If he liked you, you knew it. And likewise, if he didn't. Nevertheless, no one can ever deny Bob's generosity. Every year about this time, as an employee of the *BAR*, I was directed to cut checks in the hun-

dreds of thousands of dollars made out to various AIDS charities and other entities that depended on fundraising to survive. There was no big fanfare. A check would arrive for each one without even an explanation.

The *BAR* prospered throughout its existence. It became one of the most influential publications in the entire LGBT communities of the world. A long list of talented, astute editors were on board, and their individual approach made the *BAR* a consistent award-winner in whatever venue it was nominated.

Bob's record of involvement and influence is chronicled elsewhere in this week's issue. But I would point out to those who do not know that Bob Ross was a leather man long before many can remember. He was a member of the Barbary Coasters MC and was the chef for many of their weekend bike runs and also served in the same capacity for other bike clubs. He wanted the *BAR* to cover all aspects of San Francisco's gay/lesbian population, so in October of 1971 he prevailed upon me to write this leather column. Many other gay newspapers will never allow a leather column, even today.

As a biker, Bob was present at many of the weekend bike runs that existed in the city. There was no Inter-Club Fund in those days, and when the Forum of San Francisco was inaugurated, he was instrumental in helping that organization become accepted.

I am both grateful and proud

next page ►



Leather

EVENTURES IN LEATHER

Friday, December 19

The Exiles throw their last offering of the year at a leather swap meet at the Women's Building. \$3 for members, \$6 for guests; doors open 1930, program 2000 to 2200. For info: www.theexiles.org.

Weekend, January 9-11

Fetish Fair at the Boston Park Plaza in Beantown by the New England Leather Alliance all weekend with a fleamarket. For info, click on www.nle-newengland.org/fff.html. Or call (617) 426-2000.

Saturday, January 10

Mr. Gauntlet II Leather at the Gauntlet II in Los Angeles, the first contest to send someone to the Mr. L.A. Leather contest in March.

Sacramento Valley Leathermen (SVL) install

their new officers at the Bolt tonight, followed by a bar crawl then back to the Bolt to finish it off. For more info: www.svclub.org or call (916) 486-5500.

Weekend, January 16-20

First biggie of the year is the Mid-Atlantic Leather weekend in Washington, D.C. with the Mr. Mid-Atlantic Leather Contest and lots of events. The IML 2004 Judges will be announced at a press conference that weekend and a new titleholder will be named to succeed Alvin York. For more info: www.leatherweekend.com.

Weekend, January 23-25

Mr. Padlock Leather contest in Phoenix, Arizona with the usual three-day menu. For info: (602) 828-7976.

Sensational sluts

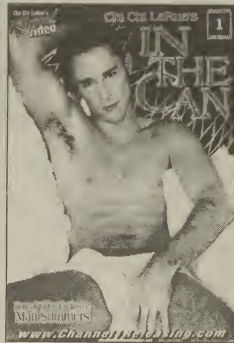
by John F. Karr

When Chi Chi LaRue makes films for his own company, Rascal Video, he is unbounded by imposed formulas. On his home turf, on his own terms, he's recently delivered a string of movies marked by abundant good humor, a constantly zingy style, and joy in the nastiness of sex. These rascacious movies sprinkle a lightness of spirit over Chi Chi's well-known sexual gluttony, and are a happy discovery.

Even happier is their discovery of Matt Summers. He's a natural star. I say that not only because he's left natural his unshaven crotch, but because this 26-year-old former accountant has what it takes. He's attractively gaunt, with black sideburns, a chin soul-patch, and permanent five o'clock shadow roughing him up. He has absolutely no gag reflex, he loves to get deeply banged while jerkin' his meat, and he's got that show-biz *sine qua non*: a gimmick. He's possessed when cumming like a Jehovah's Witness getting the spirit. He thrashes and jerks in *grand mal* seizures that last unnaturally long, from 30 to a record 51 seconds (oh, yes; in the interest of reportage, I timed them).

This doozy is the climax of *In the Can*, in which Paul Johnson's muscle butt gets shafted following extreme rimming by Joe Foster, and the adorable, sturdy young athlete and fuckbunny Trent Atkins rides upon Nick Capra. But Matt Summers and longtime fave Kyle Kennedy stop the show. Matt has no trouble swallowing Kyle's lengthy shaft down to the balls, while Kyle's fingers explore Matt's acquiescent asshole. Which is soon clamped over Kyle's face, getting slathered and lubed so that Matt can plunk it down with a whoosh on Kyle's rigid reamer. Matt's boner beats against his belly as he bounces, and Kyle churns Matt's ass so ferociously that Matt's Big Bang blast rocks the screen for almost a minute.

I'm a little overheated here, so



let's pause and investigate the general airiness of Chi Chi's movies. He usually avoids both plot and dialogue, casually draping an anthology of scenes around a theme.

His sets are usually easy-going abstractions — brightly-colored walls backing a bed or chaise — so sex is well-framed in architecture, instead of blurred in the scatter of a room.

Scenes are frequently released from formulaic length to the time that the quality of the sex deserves.

And the sex is dependably deserv-ing. Chi Chi accepts only the hardest boners. He dotes upon ravenous rimming. And I dote upon Chi Chi's specialty. I've long been at a loss to name this straddle-fuck position that presents both sets of performers' genitalia to the viewer. This month's *Playgirl* (which I peruse as a research tool) depicted a woman thusly riding her dude, and called it the Reverse Cowgirl. So for us, it's here on in the Reverse Cowboy. Chi Chi gives it to ya, with the ridin' cowboy's crank smackin' up and down, or better yet, doing a 360° propeller.

Ride 'em, cowboy

Which is what you'll thrill to in *What Men Do*. It depicts what some slightly rough, tattooed and be-jocked younger men do when they're out cruisin' and all horned up. What a reverse cowboy for



tight little Tag Adams, almost as violent as he was in Titan's *Carny*, having dirty sex in a dirty public john with insouciantly named new star Johnny Hazzard. They're sensationally slutty. In a gonzo threeway, Drew Peters does a Reverse Cowboy atop Ricardo Dias, after Matt Summers, as their manic centerpiece, gets fucked berserk.

Matt's hole has never been as beautifully explored as it is by sturdily built and steely-bonered Alex LeMonde in *A Man's Tail*. Matt responds rapturously, folding his legs behind his head to better accommodate Alex's tongue. It's only a little unkind that their sucking and rimming don't culminate in a fuck. That glory is saved for a subsequent scene with Matt and tattooed punk Nick Piston. The romantically plotted movie itself ends with an endearing and niftily filmed sequence. Rapacious Anthony Shaw — in shoulder-length blond hair and his usual sexual heat — is actually a merman! After seducing landlubber Joe Foster (another pip of a Reverse Cowboy here), Anthony carries Joe away into the deep blue sea.

I'd also like to recommend the youthful cast of *Starting Young* (oh, joyfully nasty Trent Austin flip-flopping with Trey Alimore!), and give credit to Chi Chi's consistently excellent crew: videographer Hue Wilde, editor Scott Coblio, and composer JD Slater. ▼

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Brandon, who is fast becoming another Will Clark when it comes to putting those naughty-boy actors on display for a "cause". In this case, Julian's fundraiser was staged to benefit both his travel fund and the Magnet men's health agency. Since no travel funds are available to him, Julian found it necessary to help out the new agency as well.

The Daddy's bartenders were put up for bidding for dinner dates, with Officer Brenda once again auctioning them off for premium prices. There were drawings for lots of items including 49ers game tickets from Jaguar Bookstore, to mention just one. Lonnie Tuck and Snatch provided the entertainment. All in all, some \$1,600 was raised. Good show!

All around the leather zones, leather bars and personalities, titleholders and just plain decent folks staged events geared to raise money for the needy.

Finally, if you're looking for a quality holiday gifts, the 15%-off sale on all boots continues at Stompers until the end of the month, so get on down there and revel in boot heaven! ▼



Here's Daniel Hogue, Mr. Central Valley Leather (Fresno) who will compete for the IML 2004 title in Chicago next May.

Mister Marcus

◀ previous page

to have been associated with Bob Ross. He mentored me, encouraged me and supported all my efforts. He was there as I became the first emperor of San Francisco, in my involvement in helping found Operation Concern along with my beloved Empress Maxine, in my involvement with the AIDS Emergency Fund as the first ever co-chair with my pal Sharon McNight, and even in my initiation into the leather lifestyle.

It is not easy to lose a friend of over 30 years, but there it is. I guess the only thing left to do is continue. In Bob's words, "Do it your way, but do it right." I've never forgotten those words, and I doubt I ever will.

Life does go on

The holiday season forges ahead, relentlessly. Last Thursday, December 11, Mr. SF Leather Julian Marshburn staged a fundraising party at Daddy's. In attendance was a cornucopia of porn actors headed by Michael

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OUT & ABOUT

Calendare

by Mark Mardon

Bye, sweetie

He always called me "sweetie" or "sweetheart," his quiet terms of endearment for the surprising number of people he actually liked. Surprising, because when he didn't like somebody, he let them and everyone else know it loudly and in no uncertain terms. Various members of ACT UP San Francisco come to mind — the AIDS denialists, as he described them when he was being polite, saving much more colorful phrases for when he wasn't.

Bob Ross was a commanding figure in the gay, lesbian, transgender, bisexual community (right down to the end, he hated the term queer). To work for him was to be caught up in a whirlwind, to experience the inner workings of the City up close and personal, and to witness the sometimes hard-handed wielding of economic, political and, yes, even artistic influence by the patriarchy. By virtue of his immense willpower and enormous effort sustained over several decades, first as a restaurateur on Polk Street, then as founder/publisher of the *BAR*, Ross rose to a position of great prominence in San Francisco, not just in the gay and lesbian community — which he and his newspaper did as much as any person or publication to define and shape — but in the various circles of power at large. Anyone who has worked in journalism for very long understands what enormous guts, ambition and hard work it takes to build a successful publication from scratch, no matter what its orientation. Whatever your politics may be — and very likely they were often at odds with Ross's fiscally conservative/socially progressive stands — it's impossible to deny that the man built a monumental institution. His *BAR* has served as a beacon of liberation for countless thousands of men and women, in San Francisco and across the nation.

Some would say he occasionally abused his power, bending too much to the will of corporations, property owners and advertisers, and no doubt his detractors will be lacerating him long after this day. He was a difficult man with a tumultuous temperament and unyielding opinions. He often took positions that to Gonzalez-voting lefties seemed out of the Dark Ages, yet he believed in his friend Harvey Milk's dream, and pursued it relentlessly, to the betterment of this city. Bob Ross built up this town's Gay Pride practically brick by brick.

While Ross's temper could and often did go volcanic, what few on the outside realize is how deeply he cared about his community, especially the most vulnerable among us, though his was the old-school, tough-love, fatherly model of concern. In particular he cared about the model/escorts who advertise in the *BAR*'s back pages. It wasn't just about money. Ross wanted to help them get off Polk Street, to bring stability and dignity to their lives. He was a champion of their rights, and often used his influence to get the police to back off when they were pushing hustlers too hard. Ross never looked for accolades, he just did what he thought was right. ▼



Unique Derique and Moshe "YooWho" Cohen clown about in *Cirque Do Somethin'* at The Marsh. See Sunday.

Fri

'A Hed-Wigged Out X-Mas!'

@ **Castro Theatre**
Marc Huestis Presents "A Hed-Wigged Out X-Mas!" featuring John Cameron Mitchell live on stage reading Truman Capote's *A Christmas Memory*. Femcee Hekline (as Hed-Kline) will be your hostess, with hell-a-day comedy from Greg Proops (*Nightmare Before X-Mas*; *Whose Line Is It Anyway*; www.proopdog.com). Plus Matthew Martin as Heg-gy Lee, and Arturo Galster as Rockin' Granny Hedwig. Special bonus: *Glama-Rama!* presents "The Hed-Wigged Out X-Mas Pageant," featuring 14 outrageous wigs on stunning models. Big treat: screening of the far-out cult classic *Hedwig & The Angry Inch*. A benefit for the STOP AIDS Project. \$27.50 (\$50 w/meet-&-greet reception w/Mitchell). 5:30pm reception; 7:30pm gala. Tix: A Different Light Bookstore (489 Castro St.); phone 863-0611.

'Christmas With The Crawfords'

@ **Theatre Rhinoceros**
Theatre Rhinoceros and Artful Circle Theatre present *Christmas With The Crawfords*. Starring Hedda Lettuce as Joan Crawford. Created by Richard Winchester. Written by Mark Sargent. Directed by Donna Drake. It's Christmas Eve, 1944. Joan has recently been "fired" from MGM, and is looking forward to the live radio broadcast from her Brentwood mansion, to be hosted by her friend & gossip monger, Hedda Hopper. Starring David Bicha, Mark Enea, Trauma Flintstone, Matthew Martin, Mark Sargent, Tom Shaw, Nikki Star and Drew Todd. \$15-\$25. Show runs thru Jan. 3. Showtimes: Wed.-Sat. at 8pm; Sun. eves at 7pm; Sun. mats at 4pm. No performances on Xmas Day (12/25) and New Year's Eve (12/31). The Rhino, 2926 16th St. (Mission & So. Van

Ness). Tix/info: 861 5079; www.therhino.org

GAPA Men's Chorus — 'A Night Divine'

@ **Bethany United Methodist Church**
Gay Asian Pacific Alliance presents "A Night Divine," an intimate holiday concert highlighting a harmonic blend of voices. This festive full-length program features an international selection of songs, including classical pieces, folk tunes, pop standards and a round of Christmas carols (sung in Asian languages, of course!). Since 1989 the GAPA Chorus has been increasing the visibility of gay Asians and Pacific Islanders, in the process becoming the most enduring ethnically based gay choral group in America. \$5 w/post-show reception. 8pm. 1268 Clipper St. Tix/info: email gapachorus@aol.com

KITKA's 'Wintersongs'

@ **Old First Church**
The acclaimed women's vocal ensemble KITKA, returning to the Bay Area after tours of the East Coast, the Northwest and Southern California, present their fourth annual "Wintersongs" concert, showcasing songs from Bulgaria, Macedonia, Croatia, Hungary, Romania, Latvia, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine, Georgia, Moravia, Greece and beyond. Including songs from KITKA's new CD *Wintersongs* (Dianaphonica). KITKA are Leslie Bonnett, Shira Cion, Lucia Connes, Catherine Rose Crowther, Deborah Dietrich, Juliana Graffagna, Lily Huang, Janet Kutulas, Ann Moorhead, and Lily Storm. \$12 gen'l; \$9 students/seniors. Tix/info: 474-1608; www.oldfirstconcerts.org

Bill Daniel's 'Souls Harbor' @ YBCA

Opening day: As part of the performance-based series "Four in a Row," Yerba Buena Center for the Arts presents *Souls Harbor*, in which filmmaker/photographer Bill Daniels builds a viewing environment within the YBCA gallery based on documentary footage and collaged field audio. The installation approximates the interior of a live-in RV and will be assembled from artifacts and detritus gathered by Daniel from his numerous road trips across the country. The piece examines the hobo community and how graffiti art and oral history create identity and facilitate communication within hobo culture. \$6 gen'l; \$3 students/seniors (free every Thursday); free for Center members; and free for all on First Tuesdays. On view Dec. 19-January 4, 11am-5pm Tue-Sun (11am-8pm First Tuesdays). 701 Mission St. (at 3rd St.). Tix/info: 978-ARTS (2787).

mentary footage and collaged field audio. The installation approximates the interior of a live-in RV and will be assembled from artifacts and detritus gathered by Daniel from his numerous road trips across the country. The piece examines the hobo community and how graffiti art and oral history create identity and facilitate communication within hobo culture. \$6 gen'l; \$3 students/seniors (free every Thursday); free for Center members; and free for all on First Tuesdays. On view Dec. 19-January 4, 11am-5pm Tue-Sun (11am-8pm First Tuesdays). 701 Mission St. (at 3rd St.). Tix/info: 978-ARTS (2787).

Oakland Ballet's 'Nutcracker'

@ Paramount Theatre

Oakland Ballet, under the guidance of Artistic Director Karen Brown, kicks off seven performances with tonight's one-night-only "All-Star Night at the Nutcracker," a tradition featuring a variety of Bay Area sports and media celebs who take to the stage in costume and make-up, dancing as Toy Soldiers alongside Oakland Ballet dancers. Choreography by Ronn Guidi. In a nod to ever-increasing budget constraints, this year's *Nutcracker* will be performed to recorded music, foregoing the use of live music by the Oakland East Bay Symphony. \$10-\$55. 7pm. Also 2pm & 7pm Dec. 20 & 21, and 2pm Dec. 22 & 23. Paramount Theatre, 2025 Broadway, Oakland. Tix: 510-625-8497 or 415-421-8497; www.oaklandballet.org

Luna Sea Theater's 10th Anniversary Show & Save-the-Theater Benefit

On the eve of its 10th anniversary, the nation's first and only women's theater is struggling to keep its doors open. Come celebrate 10 groundbreaking, powerful and outrageous years at a one-night only show, auction, and reception benefiting Luna Sea Theater. A jam-packed who's-who potpourri cabaret of lesbian, queer, and transgender performance. The one-night-only event continues with a juicy auction, gallery installation by Noa Mohlabane, and finishes with a meet-the-artists reception. Emcees Pam Dunn, Shawna Virago &



Hedwig and the Angry Inch screens at 'A Hed-Wigged Out X-Mas!' at the Castro Theatre. See Friday.

Joe Samson host this one-night-only event. Lineup includes: B.C. Cliver, Ali Cannon, Robyn Brooks, Celestina Pearl, Phat Fly Girls, Ms. De-Meanor & Big Burlesque, Lindasusan Ulrich, HeartRhythms DrumChoir (directed by Yolanda S. Viera Allen), Fat Fuck, Karen X, and Pattie Lockard. After the loss of so many artist spaces, SF is now in danger of losing the nation's first and only women's theater. On the eve of its 10th anniversary, Luna Sea Theater is rallying to save the theater and its performance projects for queer women, people of color, and transgender people. For ten years, Luna Sea has sustained itself as the only women's theater, inclusive and intentionally committed to queer women, communities of color and transgender communities. \$10-\$25 sliding. 8pm Luna Sea Theater, 2940 16th St. (at Capp). Tix: 863-2989. Info: www.lunaseatheater.org

Spencer Day's 'Crimson Club' @ 'Late Night at Empire'

The Plush Room's "Late Night at Empire" presents jazz/pop sensation Spencer Day's "The Crimson Club" starring piano playing crooner kid Day and a wild and crazy crew including Trixie Carr, the dashing Brian Knecht, The Crimson Kittens (Erika Torchia and Keely Rogers Free), the return of Sonny Brown (Brandon Burrell) and Beyonce Knowles (also Brandon Burrell), and the Crimson Club Orchestra. Plus The Real Intentions and spoken-word from the city's finest poets/wordsmiths. \$8 (NO-TAFLOF). Doors open

10:30pm; show at 11pm. The Plush Room at the York Hotel, 940 Sutter Street @ Leavenworth (in L. Nob Hill). Info: Plush Room box office, 885-2800; spencerday.com; www.plushroom.com

Kinsey Sicks: 'Oy Vey in a Manger!'

@ NCTC

New Conservatory Theatre Center and The Kinsey Sicks, America's Favorite Dragapella Beauty Shop Quartet, present *Kinsey Sicks: Oy Vey in a Manger!*, in which the Sicks turn their considerable talents to the global effort to stamp out holiday cheer. Oy Vey combines the Kinsey Sicks' award-winning a cappella singing, biting wit and over-the-top drag in a theatrical attempt to answer the age-old Yuletide question: "Why is this night different from all other nights?" Come hear "Lusty the Snowman," "God Bless Ye Femmy Lesbians," "A Lay in a Manger," and the new Xmas cuisine standard, "Soylent Night." \$25-\$34. 8pm Wed-Fri; 7:30 & 10pm Sat. Thru Jan 3, 2004 10th Anniversary Show on Tue., Dec. 30. Special New Year's Eve show Dec 31. No shows on Dec 24 & 25 and Jan 1. NCTC, 25 Van Ness Ave (at Market). Tix/info: 861-8972; www.nctcsf.org

Lunatique Fantastique's 'Foiled Again!'

@ **NCTC**
New Conservatory Theatre Center and Lunatique Fantastique present "Foiled Again," a completely new fourth episode in the company's "Wrapping paper Capers" series, written by Liebe Wetzel and performed by the Lunatique Fantastique Ensemble. A holiday who-dunnit with all the trimmings. \$10 youth; \$12 adults. 2pm. Also on Dec 22, 23, 27, 29 & 30, plus Jan 3, 2004. Special shows: 10am & 11:30am Mon-Thru for school groups and families. NCTC, 25 Van Ness Ave. (near Market). Tix/info: 861-8972; www.nctcsf.org

'Inside of Inside'

@ The LAB

Come Saturday to The LAB to find rare and extraordinary work by artists and handmade object makers at affordable prices. Browse the fixed price cheap art wall from 3 to 9 pm, with work ranging from \$2 to \$45. Bid on pieces in a silent auction from 6 to 9 pm, or purchase a raffle ticket at only \$20 to be drawn for selected works by Tammy Rae Carland, Carolyn Ryder Co-



The women of KITKA perform Eastern European "Wintersongs" at Old First Church. See Friday.

ley, Alicia McCarthy, Andrew Schoultz and Sara Thustra. This event will be hosted by local talent Tara Jepsen and Beth Lisick with DJ Juanita and live music by Alicia McCarthy and guests. All proceeds from this event benefit the Inside of Inside exhibition of 70 women artist on "home," curated by The Big Ballyhoo artist collective, opening this winter at The LAB. This event is wheelchair accessible. The LAB is located at 2948-16th St (btwn Capp & South Van Ness). Info: 864-8855; www.thelab.org

Thrive @ The Center

Thrive, a group of gay HIV+ guys breaking the isolation of HIV, presents a Mini Pot Luck with fruits, desserts, finger foods and fun. Donation suggested. 1-3pm. A fragrance-free event. SF LGBT Community Center, 1800 Market St. (at Octavia).

Gay & Lesbian Sierrans @ San Pedro County Park

Join Gay and Lesbian Sierrans (GLS) for an easy three-mile loop on the Hazelnut Trail in San Pedro County Park. This hike should take about one and a half hours, and the park is about a 20-min. drive from SF. Meet 10am in front of the Glen Park BART station in SF for carpools. Lunch, sturdy shoes, layers recommended. Rain cancels. Info: Call hike leader at 415-401-8426.

Phranc + Visitors Kimberly

@ Cafe Du Nord
In concert: Phranc (the "all-American Jewish lesbian folksinger"), along with Stay at Home Bomb (Alice Bag from LA punk legends The Bags), Jackie Strano, and The Visitors Kimberly (Moon Trent and Consuelo Ramirez). \$12. 9pm. Cafe Du Nord, 2170 Market St. (between Sanchez and Church). Tix/info: 861-5016; www.cafedunord.com.

Mochi Pounding Ceremony @ Japantown Peace Plaza

Japanese drummers, mochi pounders and audience volunteers will demonstrate their skill, strength, coordination and dance-like foot work as they wield long-handled wooden mallets and pound large quantities of steaming rice into a thick paste as thunderous rhythms of taiko drums set the pace. When the rice has been pounded to the right consistency, it will be sweetened and shaped into bite-size cakes for the audience to sample. The making and eating of mochi have been integral to the Japanese New Year's celebration since the Heian period (794-1185). Mochi symbolizes happiness and good fortune. Free. 1pm. Post & Buchanan. Also 4pm at the Japan Center Kinokuniya Bldg. at Post & Webster. Info: 567-4573.

Sun 21

Beer, Sex & BLOW @ Eagle Tavern

The Center for Sex & Culture (CSC) and BLOW (Beautiful Lips on Whistles) present "Beer, Sex & BLOW," a benefit beer/beverage bust with dinner. A kink-positive event. The CSC provides non-judgmental, sex-positive sexuality education and support to diverse populations by means of classes, workshops, social gatherings and hands-on, practical skills-building events. BLOW is a grassroots harm-reduction campaign



Legendary Lesbians Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin are the focus of The Center's Movie Night. See Monday.

using the safety-whistle as a symbol to empower against hate crimes. Free condoms & lube courtesy the SF Dept. of Health — AIDS Prevention Office. \$8 beer/beverage bust. Raffle-o-Porn tickets \$2 each (\$5 for 3). 3-6pm. 12th & Harrison. Info: pusspuss-puss@yahoo.com

Cirque Do Somethin' @ The Marsh

Preview: The Marsh presents *Cirque Do Somethin'* — a holiday offering from acclaimed clowns Unique De-rigue and Moshe "YooWho" Cohen. Their routines include unicycles, bicycles, human percussion, battles with music, disappearing acts, and rubber chickens. \$5-\$10 sliding previews (Dec. 21, 22, 23 at 3pm & 8pm); \$10-\$15 sliding regular run (Dec. 26-30 and Jan. 2-11 at 8pm, w/3pm matinees on Jan. 2, 3, 4, 10 & 11. The Marsh, 1062 Valencia St. (btwn 21st & 22nd). Tix/info: 826-5750; www.themmarsh.org

'Gone With the Wind' @ Castro Theatre

High-spirited Southern belle Scarlett O'Hara struggles valiantly to save her beloved plantation in this famous Civil War flick starring Vivien Leigh, Clark Gable, Leslie Howard, Olivia de Havilland, Hattie McDaniel and Butterfly. Showtimes: 1:30, 7:30pm. Info: 621-6120; www.castrotheatre.com

Mon 22

Gay Matinée's 'Legendary Lesbians' @ The Center

The Center presents "Legendary Lesbians," a special Holiday Celebration featuring Del Martin and Phyllis Lyon live at an exclusive screening of the documentary *No Secret Anymore!* Meet the most legendary lesbian couple since Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas. As founders of the modern lesbian civil rights movement, Phyllis and Del have been partners in love and political activism for half a century. The film, directed by internationally recognized documentary artist JEB (Joan E. Biren), the film tenderly chronicles their enduring passion and activism through archival photographs, interviews, and cinematic surprises. The world premiere sold out the Castro Theater in February. Screenings at 4pm & 6:30pm. Join Del & Phyllis at 5pm for discussion & reception. Admission free for Seniors & Center members. Guests welcome. Seating limited, come early. 1800 Market St. (at Octavia). Info:

email gayflix@yahoo.com

'Citizen Kane' @ Castro Theatre

Voted the best movie ever made by a panel of international film critics and directors, *Citizen Kane* (1941) was the audacious debut of 25-year old Orson Welles and tells the fictionalized saga based on the life of newspaper magnate William Randolph Hearst. With Joseph Cotton and Dorothy Comingore. Cinematography by Gregg Toland. Script by Welles and Herman J. Mankiewicz. Directed by Orson Welles. Showtimes: 2:00, 4:30, 7:00, 9:30pm. Info: 621-6120; www.castrotheatre.com

Tue 23

'Vertigo' @ Castro Theatre

Vertigo (1958), the ultimate San Francisco film, directed by Alfred Hitchcock, starring Jimmy Stewart as retired police detective John Ferguson hired to track down the wife (Kim Novak) of an old college buddy before she can commit suicide. He must wrestle with his fear of heights, however, and the results are dizzying. Music by Bernard Herrmann. 70mm restoration by Robert A. Harris and James C. Katz. 128m. Showtimes: 1:30, 4:15, 7:00, 9:35pm. Info: 621-6120; castrotheatre.com

Wed 24

SF Gay Men's Chorus 'Home for the Holidays' @ Castro Theatre

Golden Gate Performing Arts, Inc. continues a San Francisco tradition, presenting the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus under the baton of Dr. Kathleen McGuire, Artistic Director and Conductor, for the 14th Annual "Home for the Holidays" concerts on Christmas Eve. This holiday concert will celebrate Christmas, Hanukkah, Winter Solstice and Kwanzaa, along with the sheer joy of being with "family." Featuring selections from The Carpenter's *A Christmas Portrait* with special guest vocalist Meg Mackay echoing the sultry tones of Karen Carpenter. Also included will be Randall Thompson's classic *Alleluia*, an audience carols sing-along, the traditional conduct-the-chorus auction, a not-to-be-missed hilarious rendition of the Hallelujah Chorus from Handel's *Messiah*, and a special appearance by "Martha

Stewart"! SFGMC is the oldest openly gay men's chorus in the world, having first performed on the steps of City Hall in San Francisco the night of the 1978 assassinations of Mayor George Moscone and Supervisor Harvey Milk. \$15 advance, \$20 door. Three shows: 5pm, 7pm & 9pm. Castro Theatre, 429 Castro St. Tix/info: 865-3650; www.sfgmc.org

'Kung Pao Kosher Comedy' @ New Asia Restaurant

Kung Pao Kosher Comedy™ presents meshugganah Jewish humor, scrumptious Chinese food and fortune cookies filled with Yiddish proverbs during the Christmas holidays. It is one of the largest annual Jewish events in SF, attended by Jews, non-Jews, gay and straight, looking for an alternative way to get through the holidays. Hosted by openly queer comedian Lisa Guldig (Feygelah Schmeigelah; *Funny Girlz*; *Queer Comedy Quack Up*), whose mother unintentionally writes most of her material. Starring Judy Gold, Ed Crasnick, and Bruce Smirnoff. \$50 dinner show (6pm); includes 7-course Chinese banquet & comedy; \$35 cocktail show (9:30pm); includes egg rolls, soft drink & comedy). Also Xmas Day (5pm & 8:30pm shows) and Dec. 26 & 27. New Asia Restaurant, 772 Pacific Ave. (btwn Grant & Stockton). Tix/info: 522-3737; www.koshercomedy.com

Dignity SF

@ The Center

The LGBT Catholic Organization, Dignity San Francisco, will hold its second annual Christmas Eve Mass at the Center, 1800 Market Street, at 8:30pm. All are welcome to gayly celebrate the arrival of Christmas. Info: Dignity SF Co-Chair John Brown at 415-355-2607.

Tue 23

Tenderloin Tessie Holiday Dinner @ First Unitarian Church

Tenderloin Tessie Holiday Dinners, an all-volunteer organization, provide a welcoming, comfortable, hot dinner to the elderly, disabled, displaced, families with children, and the homeless, always including the alone and lonely who do not have a family or a place to go. Volunteer members of the leather community, the drag community, politicians and many others tend to the guests. The dinners are a sit-down affair with an attempt to create a family atmosphere. Free. 11am-4pm. Volunteers are needed for: Kitchen and Set up on Xmas Eve, Dec. 24, 4-7pm; Dining Room on Xmas Day, 11am-4pm; Clean up on Xmas Day, 4-6pm. First Unitarian Church, 1187 Franklin (at Geary). To volunteer, contact Toby at 255-7503 or Tom Basch 922-0422.

WANNA SUBMIT?

Send your calendar event listings to:

Mark Mardon
Out & About
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Essential truths

Buddhist paintings at Berkeley Art Museum

by Michael McDonagh

Can the West be saved? And by the West I don't mean this continental shelf we're perched on facing Asia, but our "It's all about me" culture, which seems to be imploding both financially and personally wherever you look. Put even more broadly, can we be saved from ourselves and each other, and achieve enlightenment? Or maybe we should just accept the world as it is and us as we are, and just go from there? These are just a few of the questions provoked by the Berkeley Art Museum's show *Awakening: Buddhist Paintings from Tibet, China, and Japan*, which occupies its two Asian galleries through Feb. 22. Though it's a small exhibit (there are only 16 pieces), it's exquisite and should provoke thought.

Buddhism isn't a pie-in-the-sky religion, but one that demands that one confront oneself as one is. The American Buddhist nun Pema Chödrön puts it this way in her book *Awakening Loving-Kindness*, "The point is not to try to change ourselves. It's about befriending who we are already. The ground of practice is you or me or whoever we are right now, just as we are." The pieces here, though quiet, are certainly confrontational.

That clearly applies to the Tibetan one representing the Thousand-Armed, Thousand-Eyed Avalokiteśvara. This deity is "the Lord who looks with compassion on suffering beings," though his top two heads are those of the wrathful Mahakala, who protects Buddhist practitioners on the road to enlightenment, and Avalokiteśvara's divine father Amitabha, perhaps symbolizing how

anger is fear which blinds us from seeing reality, and keeps us from knowing that our real Buddha nature is compassion.

This *thangka* (rolled painting or scroll) is one of several in the show collected by the American Theos Bernard (1908-47), one of the first Westerners to travel to Tibet in order to study its mysteries first-hand. Bernard, who wrote a book about his experiences called *Land of 1,000 Buddhas*, aroused much interest in esoteric Eastern practices. With a piece as beautiful as this *thangka*, which dates from the late 19th to early 20th century, it's easy to see why. The East, after all, offers a completely different and inherently psychological way of viewing the world.

The Tibetan *thangka* *The Wheel of Life*, from the same period, also from the Bernard collection, clearly does that. It's an evocative and very colorful painting which charmingly depicts the three poisons: greed, hatred, and ignorance, in the innermost circle; and the barriers to enlightenment: craving, clinging, impulses, and so forth, in the outermost. The things which keep us from attaining Buddhahood couldn't be more clearly or cleverly pictured, and the delicacy of the rendering keeps something didactic from seeming so.

Perfect world

The 17th-century Japanese



Unknown artist, China, Vajrabhairava, the Bodhisattva Manjusri in His Horrific Form (1512), ink and colors on silk

Landscape with Buddhist Temples and Figures by Unkoku Toteki presents a magical view of mountains and temples floating in a copper-pewter ground. Its mandala-like structure (the temples occupy the middle part) gives it an architectural solidity and grandeur, which makes perfect sense because mandalas are perfected environments. This ink-and-colors-on-silk painting in all likelihood shows the Isle of Immortals in the Eastern Japan Sea, associated with the Buddha of Healing. The ordinary universe is built on ignorance (just look around), while this one is unalloyed bliss, as well as a perfected state to which all seekers after enlightenment aspire.

I was lucky to meet the young up-and-coming American artist Helen Mirra when I caught *Awak-*

ening, and took a look at her just-ready Matrix show, *65 Instants*, with museum publicist Rod MacNeil. Its title refers to the number of perceivable things in a moment. The artist's pieces are on identically-sized reclaimed pallet wood, which she paints. These looked appropriately ghostly and seemed to vanish just as I looked at them. And they reminded me of what my psychic told me once: "Love, but don't hold on," because in the attachment to, we suffer. That's good advice for anyone, whether or not they're in Buddhist practice. Just be open. Flow. In mind, and surely heart. ▼


Berkeley Art Museum's third Buddhist-themed show, *The Garden*, opened Dec. 7. Info: (510) 642-1295,

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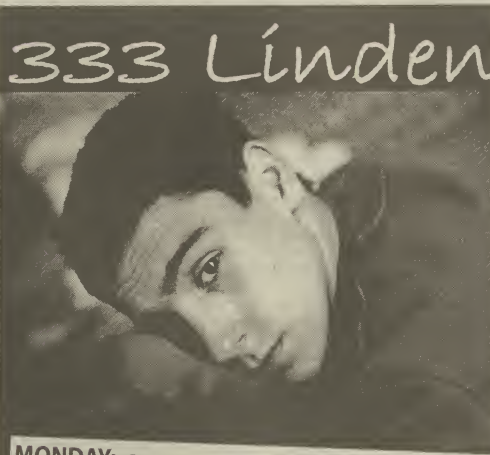


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PARTING GLANCES

Lady Macbeth 2nd Intermission 11/14
You (Handsome bear type) standing on the first floor wearing brown shirt. I (Filipino-American) was leaving. Our eyes met, lingered. Are you "moistanddeep"? I'd like to meet! Please call. ☎ 71009

Muni Bus 22 Fillmore
Sunday Nov 16. You Asian, Me Irish. Thought you were with your boyfriend. Strong eye contact. Let's Meet. ☎ 72893

Richard- Hottie on Muni Inbound
It's David, the boy in tight Wranglers. We struck a chord. I'd like to strike more. Give me a call and leave your number. S 72909

Blow Buddies Friday Nov. 28
You bare-chested/shaved head, slim: me bare-chested with glasses. Would like to meet you. We cruised, but did not meet each other. ☎ 71000

Ricardo
We met waiting for the "F" line at Castro about 7 pm. I was heading for an art opening. Let's continue our conversation. Ernie. S 71001

SEEKING RELATIONSHIP

Looking for Friendship or More
Brazilian, 37 yo, 5'7", 142# Brn hair and eyes, stable and sincere, romantic, nice, smooth body seeking GWM or GLM. I like all types of Guys under 45. Must be serious, no drugs or heavy drinkers. ☎ 71010

Looking for Mister Right
Me 40+ mix brown. 5'9", 160#, 81/2". Enjoy work, fucking. Will respond to everybody. ☎ 71011

Life is about Sharing
GAM, 37, 5'7", 155#. Sensitive, sincere, caring professional seeks thoughtful, giving, masculine, professional GM who seeks friendship/relationship. Live 90 minutes outside of SF. Will relocate for "The real Thing". ☎ 71012

Muscular Italian American 46yrs
Stable, sincere, romantic. Seeks a smooth Asian to date on a regular basis. Please be reliable, sincere. No games, BS ☎ 72905

Affectionate Seniors
WM, 48, 6', 165#, Dk Hair and eyes. I am looking for affectionate seniors who enjoy kissing, cuddling, and oral pleasures. Possible long term relationship. Lone wolves, husky, bearded, not into mainstream a plus, Smokers OK. No gay scene or lifestyle please. ☎ 72906

Free Spaghetti
Win a delicious meal by answering this ad. If you are a slender, masculine guy 18 to 45. Cook is slender, masculine WM, 44. Into Friendship and Naked body contact. ☎ 72907

Bubble Butt Latin/Asian Boy
5'8" 140, 35, looking for others for hot time kicking it. One-on-one, couples, groups. Like all types of guys. ☎ 72894

48 yo, In shape Handsome Man
Looking for LTR with same. Age, race, to p, bottom not important. In shape gym toned body and cool attitude a must. ☎ 72895

Mutual JO and 69 Play
I am Latin, 40yo, 5'7", 153#, HIV+, Healthy, slim muscular body, smooth round butt, husky Look. ISO masculine GWM/GLM with small size 25/40 yrs, slim, smooth, HIV+, healthy. Safe sex. 5'5" to 5'10". No drugs. Please be serious. ☎ 72896

Seeking Friendship or More
GWM, 33yo, 5'10, 160#, brn hr, brn eyes, HIV+, healthy. Seeking others for dating or possible relationship. Like movies, books, cooking and fitness. Age, race unimportant. ☎ 72897

Body Contact-SouthBay/Santa Clara
Me: Very Clean- UB2 or forget it. HIV- only! Hot 44 yo white male. 6'1", 225#, Hzl/grey, seeking hot daddy/bear type to keep me warm this winter. S 72910

Snuggler- (not smuggler)! Seeks companion
Southern Contra Costa (Alamo, Danville, WC) for warm nights together. Interest in Trains, Trams, Travel, Opera, Symphony, Asian Languages, Love, love, love! ☎ 71002

Handsome Libra Looking for Love
HIV+ GWM, SF, Likes music, art. Looking for more than a one night stand. No drugs, pot ok... 6' Br Hr, Br eyes ☎ 71003

LESBIANS

Lonely in Reno Need a PenPal
Single white lesbian looking to converse with any single women with hopes of possibly something more. I enjoy camping, horses, and spooky movies. No drugs or heavy drinkers. ☎ 72904

SEEKING ADVENTURE

Spank your Butt
Hot, masculine top, 38, 5'11", 175#, seeks well-built bottom with nice round ass for over-the-knee spanking, role playing and plowing your ass. ☎ 71013

Fat & Chubby Men & Dildoes
Looking to start a regular dildo party with big men. Hefty GBM, 5'11", 270#, big tits, hung, seeks big, fat men who like their bodies and like dildoes. ☎ 71014

Older
I love older men and women. I am 52, in decent shape, clean, educated and horny. Will treat you well. ☎ 71015

Sacramento Area
GWM HIV-, tight little bottom, fantastic cocksucker. Needs long sessions of being fist fucked, and you can stay overnight, or longer. ☎ 72898

Bear Back Trick Rider
Hung, HIV+ Top, 50, 5'8", 200#, S/P/B, 7.5out, with stamina plus. Into 2-5 hour sessions. Looking for HIV+ lean to muscular bottom, any age/race for one night stand or LTR. ☎ 72899

Versatile Boyish Asian
Seeks smooth gym toned muscular WM to kiss and lick all over from head to toe. I want to be your new oral buddy on a regular basis. ☎ 72900

None of the Above?
If you're not buffed, pretty, hung or young enough for those other guys let's get together. I'm poz, 54, 5'10", 155#, S/P hair, and goatee, give great head and love getting fucked. ☎ 72901

Mature, Black topman, 5'9", 180
Thinning hair, moustache, 8.5". Seeking mature masculine submissive bottom man with conservative appearance. Husky build and moustache a plus. Zip 94501. Phone required. ☎ 72902

Butt Naked
Like masculine guys with tight firm butts 18 to 40 with 29 to 32 inch waistlines. Masculine WM 44, also trim waisted with handsome cock. Open to whatever your into. S 72908

Versatile Stud
Wanting studly men in Contra Costa City. Top or bottom. Kick back or dominant types with a nice big one A+. Beer can size dick for your pleasure. Partner available. Safe sex only. S 72911

Straight Guys dig my Cocksucking
And I am good at it. Call me, we can watch video, jo, "69", party, etc. Str8 guys contact me. S 72912

Looking for Guys in Marin
I'm seeking guys who live in Marin and north of there for fun and good times, hung a plus. S 72913

To share Great Times!
Sexy attractive guy, well hung and good looking seeks guys who are hung to watch videos, have fun etc. Call me. S 72914

Guys in San Jose and Surrounding Areas
Call me if you want to have a good time. Hung a plus. We can watch videos, listen to music etc. S 72915

On call Free Oral Servicing
GWM will BJ/Rim/JO/Massage an hour minimum For incredible release. No reciprocation necessary. All Races welcome but must be 18-28, healthy, fit. Santa Cruz Area. Stay the Night?? ☎ 71004

Novice Curious Nudist
Seeking more experienced buddy for heavy, intense J/O, dirty talk, cock worship, partying buddy desired. Some oral OK, but mostly J/O. Your place pm preferred. Not into toys, videos, groups, tits, shaved body parts, anal. Long partying scenes or overnites encouraged. Like to explore being nude with another man w/o the pressure of performing in a oral/anal manner. ☎ 71005

Need a Dad??
Clean, healthy 68yo G.W. Masculine dad needs you too! Please be Bi/G. W. Masculine and over 0/40. ☎ 71006

FETISHES

ISO Serious Nipple Work out Buddy
49 yo GWM, 220#, stocky, brn/brn, Salt and pepper goatee, tats, piercings, Smoker and huge erect nipples. ISO dominate, masculine nipple pig stud for serious nipple workout sessions with growth in mind! Smokers A+ Please Call. ☎ 71016

Feet and Ass Wanted
I want to suck and sniff your feet while I stretch your ass with my fist. Very discreet. ☎ 71017

Nipples- Solid Workouts on Firm Hard nipples.
Serious to sensuous long sessions with mutual satisfaction. No losers, we both win, GWM, 40's seeks same. ☎ 71018

Share Zeal for Gay Male Porn
Do you like DVDs, videos showing anal butplay, and assorted sex interests. Join my search. ☎ 72903

Drag Queens, threesomes.
Me: Mr.XXX, 55 ISO all drag queens, 21-40 only, for suck, fuck. Cigar smokers, tattoos, 69, pretty lips, tight asses. No drugs, alcohol. S 72916

Stroking for Hours
Seeking masculine/average buddy for heavy intense J/O, dirty talk, cock worship while drinking/partying. Some oral OK. Your place, PM only. Not into toys, videos, groups, anal. Long party scenes or overnites only. S 71007

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B/D, S/M, spanking, C/B/T, being rimmed, toys, hard cocks, slave, role-play, fireplace, hot tubs, singles or couples. Let's meet now! ☎ 71008

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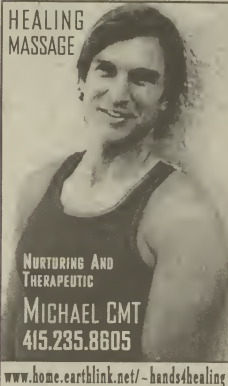
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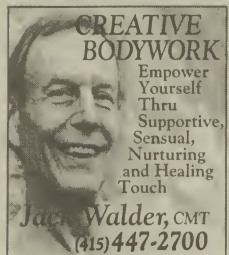
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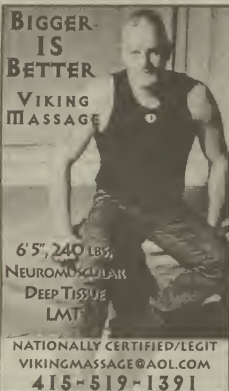
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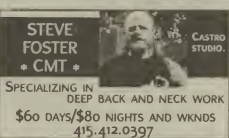


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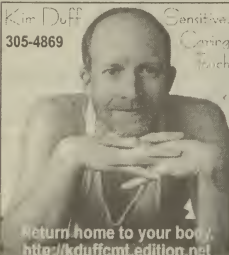
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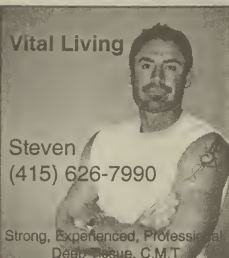
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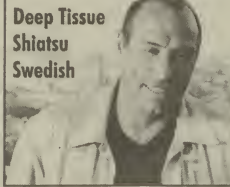
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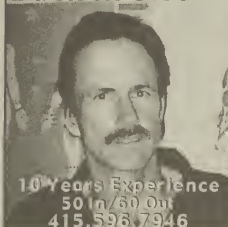
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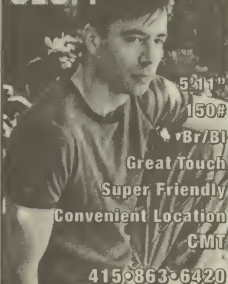


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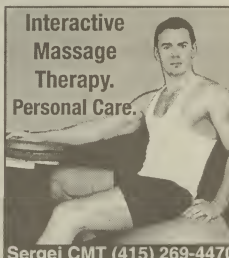
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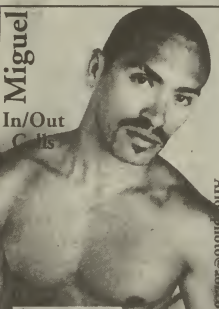
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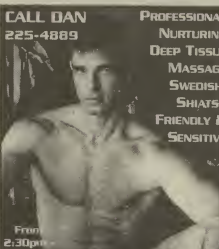
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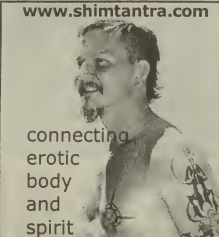
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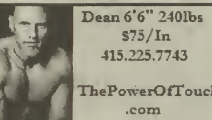


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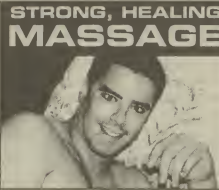
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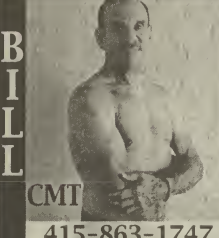
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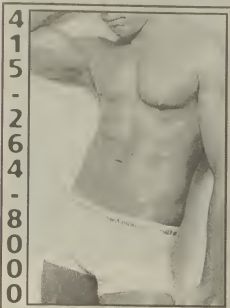
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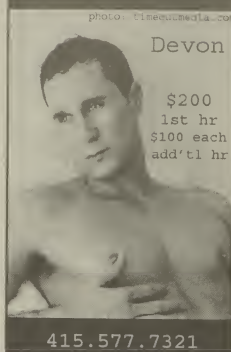
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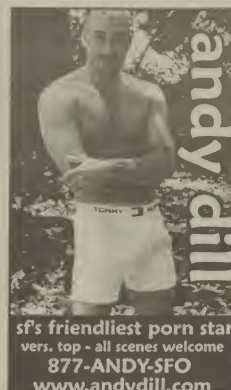
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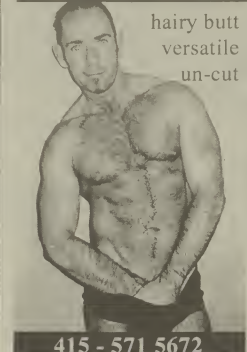
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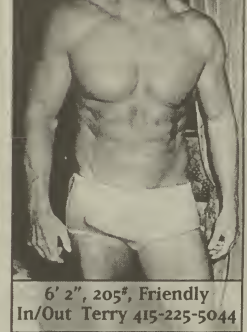
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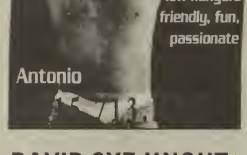
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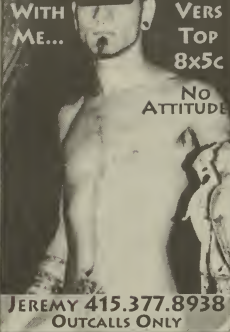
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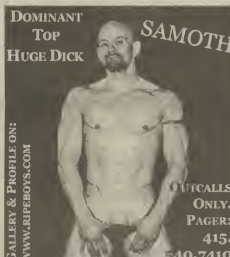
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